Worship in Drama

Charles A. Boyd

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WORSHIP IN DRAMA

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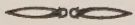
WORSHIP IN DRAMA

A Manual of Methods and Material for Young People and their Leaders

By

CHARLES ARTHUR BOYD



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TO

B. L. B.

WHOSE CONSTANT COOPERATION
AND EARNEST ENCOURAGEMENT
HAVE INSPIRED THE MESSAGE OF THIS BOOK

AND TO

The Scores of Young People

IN MANY CHURCHES IN MANY STATES
THROUGH WHOSE ENTHUSIASTIC COOPERATION
THE POSSIBILITIES OF
"WORSHIP IN DRAMA"
HAVE BEEN DEMONSTRATED

FOREWORD

BELIEVING that " worship in drama " is not only possible and practicable, but intensely desirable, the author ventures to embody in the following chapters some of the results of the delightful experiences of participating in such worship in many churches in a number of States. The suggestions which follow are not the theoretical imaginings of an idealist, but the result of very practical experiences. In the course of a decade, in all kinds of churches, in city and country, in small town and rural districts, the principles mentioned in the following chapters have been tested.

The development of interest in Religious Drama in this period of ten years is little short of marvelous. And the development of available material for the use of church-drama groups has been rapid and various.

Sometimes the development has been strong in its emphasis on the importance of right technique, sometimes on the appreciation of the material. And in this development many courses of study have been prepared, many lectures given, several books have been written.

But the writer believes that there is need for more emphasis on the worship side of the dramatic presentation in the church. If this is omitted or neglected, perfect stage technique will not make even a Biblical drama what it ought to be. It is possible to worship truly in and through drama, and this book is sent on its mission in the hope that a constantly increasing number of young people may discover and appreciate that fact, and that in some small measure these chapters and dramatic material may help toward that end.

CHARLES ARTHUR BOYD.

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PART I

THE WHY AND HOW

I

THE CHALLENGE OF A REAL NEED

"Let's give a play!"

"Sure thing—let's do it!"

"Just our class—so it will be our own!"

"Yes, and if we advertise it well, we can make heaps of money!"

"And have just lots of fun doing it, too!"

"But, what shall we give? It's got to be something different, and funny, of course."

"I know! We'll send off to Big Town—I heard of a publisher of plays there who'll send us a bunch of samples to choose from. Somebody said that he's got just tons of good things."

"Great! Let's do it—you write the letter tonight, so we can get right at it."

Perhaps the above sounds like an imaginary conglomeration of miscellaneous sentences—possibly the product of an overwrought brain. But no; very many teachers of young people will recognize these words as by no means imaginary, but very real and quite familiar through much repetition.

And the desire to "act out" the lesson, to "play" the story which has been told in public school or Sunday school, is not only common in the children's classes, it is the perfectly natural expression of that wonderful heritage of the child from the development of the race—the dramatic instinct.

In the Introduction which Prof. Norman E. Richardson has written for the pamphlets in that admirable "American Home Series" he says most truly:

> What faith is to the adult the dramatic instinct is to the child; it is the substance, the substantial realization of things hoped for. It is the power to make things happen. It is the victory that overcomes the prosaic, sawdust affairs of life.

The guidance of the development of that instinct may well be regarded then as not only not outside of the realm of the religious

teacher's work, but one of the most significant opportunities presented to him.

Since such statements as those quoted at the opening of this chapter are characteristic of many groups of young people, and since the dramatic instinct is an important factor in the " developing life," it may be safely stated as a fundamental thesis that the providing of the right sort of material, the guidance of these eager searchers for " plays " to the truly worth-while bits of material amid the floods of light, foolish, or trashy " stuff " and their training in the giving of these worth-while dramas is a real challenge to the energy, the ability, the consecration, and the daring of every teacher of religion.

There is a real need for the wise, sane, and truly devotional and genuinely Christian development of this God-implanted instinct to " play " the story, to " act a part," to forget for the moment the commonplace surroundings of the every-day life and live in a " different " atmosphere. And it is to the teacher of youth that this " challenge of a real need " comes in a very special sense. Not for a moment should we overlook the wonderful opportunity which this dramatic instinct opens to the teacher of the little children of the Beginners' and Primary Departments, or neglect to make emphatic the joy which can come to that wise and thoughtful teacher who knows how to make the lesson story real by guiding the " playing " of it in the beautifully spontaneous dramatic activity of childhood.

But even stronger and more clear is the challenge of this real need to the teacher of a class of young people, especially those in their teens, because of the increased capabilities of appreciation which have come with the years, the richer possibilities of interpretation, and the ability to undertake a real task and hold to it until its accomplishment.

When this God-implanted instinct, which so often finds its only expression in the lighter, funny (sometimes silly) type of " plays," can be guided into an expression in noble words, dignified action, and beautiful settings, then a real victory has been achieved, a real need met, an achievement attained of which one may well be proud.

Nor is this challenge so difficult of realization. At least one of the reasons for the wide-spread prevalence of the " college farce " type of dramatic entertainment, even in church circles, is the fact that until recently this sort of material was so much more widely

advertised than the other type, that it was quite the natural thing for young people to think that "The New Minister" and the "Deestrict Skule" sort of thing was all there was for them to use. But some one asks, Will the young people, especially the younger young people, take to the more serious type of material? Can we really get them to *want* to present a Biblical drama, for instance, instead of a college farce? Will they really get *interested* in the story of Ruth or Elijah or Paul, or in some missionary drama? Fortunately, the number of those brave souls who have dared to attempt the unusual in the face of oft-repeated "It can't be done" and sometimes reiterated "It ought not to be done," has now increased to the point where it is entirely possible to answer to these questions a most emphatic "Yes, they will be interested—they will really *want* to do the better things."

Hence, to every teacher and leader of youth, whether in Sunday-school class, young people's society, World Wide Guild, Boy Scout Troop, Camp Fire Circle, or unorganized group, comes the challenge of this real opportunity. And it is today a more insistent challenge than ever before. With the call of commercialized amusements becoming constantly louder and louder, and at the same time the tendency of industry making the working-day more and more merely mechanical and less thought-requiring, the church must fit its work to the needs of the day in which it dwells. Without ever descending to the low levels of "cheapness" which characterize so very large a proportion of the commercialized amusements of today, the church may, if it will, minister to the real needs of the youth whose days are spent (in so many instances) in the deadening monotony of machinelike toil, and whose evenings (quite naturally) are spent in the relaxation (?) of movie "thrillers," which for the moment at least offer an Aladdin's lamp of wonderful genius to open the portals of other and more beautiful worlds.

"If it will"—and the teachers of youth within the church are the ones to say whether or no the church will hear and heed this challenge, enter this "open door" of rare opportunity, and lead down the broad paths of beauty and truth in God's great "Play-time Garden" the eager feet of the fun-loving, beauty-loving, joy-loving youth through the right, wise development of the God-given dramatic instinct.

II

THE PLACE OF DRAMATIZATION IN THE CHURCH

There are many earnest workers in the church to whom such a title as that of this chapter comes with something of a shock of a cold plunge on a chilly morning. "Dramatization in the Church"? "Its Place"? But, of course, it has no place in the church. The place of dramatization is in the theater, not the church. This is the perfectly natural reasoning of some whose vision has so far failed to take in the full scope of the significance of the fact of the God-implanted dramatic instinct.

Since this is a God-implanted instinct, and since it, like other instincts, demands some opportunities of expression, and since it is the church's business and its supreme opportunity to minister to the whole of life, it naturally follows that there must needs be a place for dramatization in the church.

The Suggestions of History

A study of the past is frequently most illuminating with reference to the problems of the present. And this general principle holds true in the realm of the dramatic. Whether our study of the past is along the lines of the history of the Christian church, or whether it is along the avenue of literature, particularly English literature, or whether we follow the road of dramatic interpretation, we are bound to arrive at the same crossroads of historic, literary, and dramatic interest. And it is dramatic in its interest, and intensely interesting in its "dramatic-ness," when we arrive at the earliest known specimen of English drama to find that it is nothing else than a dramatic arrangement of the story of the Resurrection, arranged by the clergy of the church, to be acted by the clergy and played within the walls, yea, even within the chancel of the church!

Nor should we stop here in the surroundings of the ninth century and its immediate successors with the development of the "Mysteries," the "Miracles," and the "Moralities," important and significant as were these forerunners of the Religious Drama of today. We may wisely follow the beckonings of the past back into

the days of the Greeks and witness some great Greek tragedy. Very truly has Dr. Philip E. Osgood said in that very valuable little primer, "The Production of Religious Drama":

> From dawn to sunset we sit and watch and hear and think and worship. "Prometheus Bound" or "Œdipus" or "Alkestis" or "Agamemnon" may have been played before us; but it is a prophet's message which burns within our hearts as we disperse.

Or we may follow still further the beckoning hand of the past, back into the days of Judaism, and watch the Temple ritual with its intensely dramatic ceremony of the bringing, the examination, the acceptance, and the offering of the sacrifice—always on behalf of the man who brought it, always speaking in dramatic way of the substitution of the animal for the man.

Yes, drama and religion, however much the custom and usage of modern days may have divorced them and forced them apart into different and sometimes seemingly opposing channels, are not only not antagonistic, they are fundamentally one! In its true beginnings and its real essence drama is religious; and equally, in much of its outward expression, religion is dramatic.

To quote again from Doctor Osgood:

> Religious drama is more truly defined as a dramatic worship-form, enlisting all the worshipers (at least in spirit) in the utterance of an emotion beyond mere words. Religious drama at its best is akin to the sacraments on their liturgical side. Religious drama is prayer, praise, and teaching, by means of beauty and symbolism and poetry and lived truth.
>
> A little boy suddenly got up from the floor where he had been sitting, and threw his arms around his mother's neck to kiss her; and he said, "I just was thinking how much I love you, and I had to do something about it!" This is the idea behind truly religious drama: we have an emotion which cold prose words will not say; we have to utter what we feel with our whole being, and together.

From the view-point of history, then, we are compelled to agree that dramatization has a rightful place in the church. And the next step is a logical one, in view of the knowledge gained through our study of history, namely, that the place of dramatization in the church is not merely, nor chiefly (perhaps hardly at all), a place of entertainment.

It is obvious that the type of drama which alone can be considered *in* the church, is the *religious* drama. And if Doctor Osgood

is right, in religious drama we express ourselves in united emotional reaction to the conception of some great religious truth.

And if this is conceded, it naturally follows that the place of dramatization in the life and work of the church cannot be a minor, semioccasional, happenstance sort of a place, but, on the contrary, it must needs be a planned place—a large place, a place of prominence and power. A place, in short, where the largest possible number of the people may be used in some way in the worship through drama, and the message of the drama reach and thrill the largest possible number of worshipers.

Having granted these premises, is it too much to ask that we arrive at the logical conclusion that the proper " place " for religious drama is the *church*—that portion of the building set apart for worship, not that part ordinarily given to entertainment and social purposes? And is it too much to suggest that the place, so far as time is concerned, is in connection with the worship services of the church?

But it must always be kept in mind, both of participants and audience, that the purpose of this dramatic presentation is *worship*. And when this is kept in mind and emphasized with quiet effectiveness, there can be no question as to the appropriateness of the presentation of Bible dramas and missionary pageants in the church in connection with a service of worship on the Lord's Day.

Its Place in the Church's Program

Another phase of this question of the place of dramatization in the church is the place which this type of " expressional activity " is to have in the planned program of the church's life. The " program " of the average church includes (usually) two services of worship on Sunday, with a Sunday-school session tacked on or sandwiched in somewhere as an extra. Many churches add to this " program " a young people's meeting, and sometimes a junior meeting in the afternoon. Besides this sometimes feverish activity on the Lord's Day, most churches include in their program a midweek prayer-meeting which is frequently conspicuous by reason of two things, the smallness of its attendance and the almost complete absence of prayer. Many churches also add a more or less regular program of social activities, frequently graded according to the ages of the members and their families.

But when it comes to the matter of expressional activity of any

kind being a part of a carefully planned program, we find a vast majority of churches lamentably weak. Once or twice a year, at Thanksgiving and at Christmas, we do develop a program of giving of baskets of food to the unfortunate. And occasionally some missionary enthusiast succeeds in arousing us from our lethargy long enough to get some actual work done for the heathen (either near at home or across the sea).

But in all too many churches practically the whole program of expressional activity for the young people consists in " supporting the church," financially and physically, by our gifts of money for the running expenses of the local church and by our attendance upon its services. Is this a sufficient program for the development of the Christian life of youth?

Might it not be well worth while, then, in view of the deplorable lack of adequate expressional activity for our young people in so many churches, to accept the challenge offered us by the present remarkable revival of interest in religious drama and give it a real place in the planning of our program? Suppose, for instance, in the average church of 100 to 200 members, definite plans should be made at the beginning of the church year for the presentation of at least four worth-while, strong religious dramas during the year—two Biblical dramas and two missionary pageants. Suppose that a Religious Drama Committee of the church should be appointed to arrange for these presentations, and should plan months in advance with a different group of young people for each one of these four presentations. With such a place given to dramatization, with such prominence, could there be any other outcome than a new development of the " real-ness " of the Bible and missions on the part of the young people of that church, and a new impress on the community by the church, as scores and perhaps hundreds of people who do not ordinarily attend the services would be attracted to the church?

To sum up—the place of dramatization in the church should be a *prominent* place, a *planned* place, a *permanent* place, and a *progressive* place.

III

IN GENERAL

If worship in drama is to have anything like the place of prominence in the program of the church which was emphasized as necessary in the preceding chapter, there are certain general principles which need to be kept in mind by all who would have anything to do with the planning of such a program.

Educational Dramatics

It must be remembered, first, last, and all the time, that church drama belongs to the class of dramatic work commonly called *educational dramatics*. And it is of the utmost importance that all who are to lead in this work have a clear conception of the difference between educational dramatics and professional dramatics. In *professional* dramatics the main thought is the attracting of an audience and the making of money. One of the chief standards of the judgment of any play is "Will it draw the crowd?" And if the producer decides that it will, he is perfectly willing to lavish much money on the production. But if there seems to be little chance of the play appealing to the general theater-going public, he will not attempt it, no matter how worthy it may be as a literary production.

On the other hand, in *educational* dramatics the audience is entirely a minor consideration. There may be an audience, and in most types of educational dramatics there usually is, but the audience is not the first consideration. Educational dramatics is planned and carried out for the benefit and uplift of the participants primarily and only secondarily for the sake of the audience.

And especially in church drama, the matter of the box-office receipts is a decidedly minor consideration. In fact, if the implications of the previous chapter as to the place and time best suited to church drama are accepted, there can be no possibility of any admission-fee, or even much special appeal for extra offering. So church drama cannot be, or ought not to be, a money-making proposition. If a group of church young people have made a pledge to some missionary object, or to the local church, and want

to raise that sum as a group by a group project instead of by individual pledges, it may be entirely permissible for them to present some missionary pageant on a week-night and perhaps even charge admission, or at any rate, take a special offering for the missionary purpose.

Two Kinds of Religious Drama

In this educational drama work there are two main kinds of opportunity—the *spontaneous dramatization* and the *studied drama.* The first, as its name indicates, implies little or no preparation except the careful telling of the story to be dramatized, no laborious memorization of lines—no attempt at scenery, little, if any, costuming. In short, spontaneous dramatization is the expression in a dramatic way of the reaction of the child to the story which has been told by the teacher. The more immediate the opportunity for this dramatic expression, the better it will be.

Studied dramatization, on the other hand, involves careful preparation, thorough study, not only of the parts assigned, but also of backgrounds and surrounding conditions, in order that the dramatic interpretation of the story may be as complete and perfect as possible.

In the spontaneous type, the vivid imagination of childhood is quite capable of making a "pit" into which the brothers may lower Joseph out of a circle of kindergarten chairs, a sheepfold where the sheep may lie down for the night in peace and security out of a couple of little tables in a corner; and costumes are not only unnecessary, but frequently quite a hindrance to the free play of the imagination. Of course, the teacher must make the suggestions as to the necessary settings, etc., must guide the children in the arrangement of the story into the dramatic form, and must be constantly on the watch lest the imagination prove too vivid and rob the story of some of its dignity and beauty.

Enough has been said to indicate that the spontaneous type of dramatization finds its natural place in the younger departments of the church school, and in the week-day activities of the children. Inasmuch as a number of good books are now available for the guidance of workers in this field, the emphasis of this book will be on the other type—the studied dramatization, especially for and with young people, in the Young People's Society and the Young People's Department of the Church School.

A Real Program

A real program of religious drama in the local church is a most desirable thing. Far better than a sporadic attempt now and then to "give a play" is a carefully thought-out program of dramatic activity which shall give opportunity for dramatic expression to many young people in different groups of the church life during the year, and shall present different types of dramatic services.

Such a program involves, first of all, a Church Drama Committee, consisting of representatives of the various young people's groups within the church, the church's music committee, and some one person who has natural talent in the line of the directing of dramatic presentations. This drama committee should be one of the regular committees of the church, elected (or appointed) at the annual meeting of the church, and responsible to the church for reports. It is quite possible that this committee might wisely plan for some drama work which might be purely secular and entirely for the purpose of providing clean, right entertainment in the church. But that phase of its work is outside the scope of this book. It should be remembered however, that this type of work, equally with the more serious and definitely religious type, is real educational dramatics and must be so planned as to be of real benefit to the participants.

As a minimum, this drama committee should plan for four *drama services* in the year. (In the larger churches, with more groups of different young people available, this might wisely be increased to six or eight.) This program should provide for at least two Bible dramas, starting with the simpler ones such as "Ruth the Loving," and going on to the more complex and difficult ones, such as the "Elijah the Uncompromising" or "Paul the Far-Sighted," in this volume. And, in addition to the two Biblical dramas, two missionary pageants, or one missionary pageant, and one special day pageant, such as a Christmas pageant or an Easter drama, should constitute the program.

Some Cautions

It may be well to keep in mind from the outset in this new type of work that there are certain cautions which may wisely be observed especially because this type of work is relatively new in

many churches, and because there is apt to be a certain prejudice against it on the part of some of the more conservative church-members. It is highly desirable that this work should be launched with as much sympathetic understanding of its real purpose and nature as possible.

As an aid to such a sympathetic understanding, it is quite wise to avoid so far as possible the use of the technical theatrical terms in this religious drama work. It may seem a bit like "straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel" to suggest that it is wiser to speak of "presenting a drama," rather than "putting on a play"; to refer to "the participants" rather than "the cast"; to describe the place of presentation as the platform, rather than the stage. But the observations and experience of the writer have led to the conviction that carefulness in little things like these is a real help in disarming criticism on the part of the congregation and in creating the religious atmosphere with those who take part in the drama.

If the members of the group presenting a drama service, and the committee in charge speak of it as a "show," it will be quite natural for the show idea to become the prominent thing in the minds of the congregation and their friends. But if, even in the conversation about it, every reference avoids theatrical terms and emphasizes the religious note, it will be quite logical for everybody to think of it as a religious service, as real worship in drama.

In this same connection, it will be found quite wise commonly to avoid the ordinary appearance of the theater in the arrangement of the room where the drama service is presented. Sometimes it may seem to be absolutely necessary to have a front curtain, as similar as possible to that of the professional stage. But it is often a very real difficulty to arrange for a front curtain in the church auditorium, and it almost inevitably (as one lady expressed it) "takes away the worship atmosphere." Hence, whenever practicable (and that is usually) it will be well to have only a background curtain, and keep as far as possible the ordinary worship appearance of the church auditorium. This same caution applies, naturally, to the matter of footlights. If they can be avoided, and experience proves that they can, there is the very real advantage of eliminating one more connection with the theater, and getting rid of a good deal of more or less difficult work.

IV

ESSENTIALS IN CHURCH DRAMATIZATION

In planning, and carrying out, a program of religious drama in the church there are many very desirable things which it might be well worth while to have, were there plenty of time, talents, and money. But inasmuch as the supply of these three in any given church is usually somewhat limited, it is quite desirable, in fact almost necessary, that every one who is interested in a program of church dramatization should carefully consider certain essentials.

1. Study

This is first and most important. Remembering that the whole field of church dramatization, whether missionary pageantry, Biblical drama, hymn pantomime, or simple tableau, belongs very definitely to that class of dramatic work very properly called educational dramatics, we must recognize at the outset of our planning and preparation the vital importance of real study.

And this essential means something more than a mere memorization of the part assigned to the individual—more than a mere being able to repeat correctly the "lines" given out. Real study in preparation for a Biblical drama, a missionary pageant, or even a hymn pantomime involves an investigation of the backgrounds of the Bible story, the religious needs of some mission land, or the message of the hymn to be presented.

Of course there will be careful study of the lines by each individual—this is taken for granted—but if the pageant or drama is to be truly successful, is to have the desired effect upon the lives of the participants, there must be careful and thorough group study of the whole matter of the message to be given. If, for instance, a young people's society is planning to present the story of Elijah in dramatic form, the logical thing for that society to do is to make the life-story of Elijah the subject of its meetings for a number of Sundays before the presentation of the drama. Different phases of the thrilling story of this great life should be assigned to the various members of the group, and carefully prepared reports on those topics should be given in the meetings. A very profitable

B. Y. P. U. meeting might be held on the topic, "The Appeal of Baal-worship vs. Jehovah-worship in the Time of Elijah." And some one might very wisely make a study of the sudden appearances and equally sudden disappearances in the life of Elijah. The political backgrounds of Elijah's time and the religious implications of entangling alliances might well form another evening's study.

Or a young people's class in the Sunday school might very wisely take that course on the book of Ruth in the "Keystone Course" for the Sunday-school lessons of a series of Sundays, and make that the preparation for the presentation of the drama of "Ruth the Loving" at the conclusion of the course.

A study of the manners and customs of Bible lands and times will be found exceedingly profitable in the preparation of a Bible drama, and a study of the inadequacy of the religions of the East will be a very wise preparation for the presentation of the needs of those lands for the Christian message in some worth-while missionary pageant.

Preparing a Drama. If church dramatization is to be truly educational dramatics, the wisest course to follow in connection with this matter of study is not the ordinary method of procedure. As intimated in the opening paragraph of Chapter I, the usual method—and it is followed almost as often in the preparation of religious dramas as in the giving of plays—is to send away to some publisher who is known to have a series of such material in stock, and procure a number of dramas for examination, select the one which chances to appeal most strongly to the committee, and then proceed to assign the parts and hold the rehearsals.

Instead of this usual method, it will be very much better for the young people's society, or Sunday-school class, or whatever group is intending to present the drama, to do the preliminary studying of the backgrounds, the manners and customs of the period and country involved, get the outstanding characteristics of the life of the hero or heroine clearly in mind and then, carefully and thoughtfully, *to make their own drama.* Of course, this ideal method may not be always practicable. There may be no one in the group, and no one in the church, or even in the community, who has the talent and the training necessary for the writing of a piece of dramatic literature. It is entirely conceivable that the committee which might be appointed for the purpose might have no idea at all how to go about the preparation of the material; but,

on the other hand, in these days when so much is made of dramatic work in the schools, it will be a rare group of young people which fails to have some one or ones who would not like to try. And even though the result of their "trying" might not be as finished, or as dramatically perfect as some drama which might be purchased from some publishing house, it would have the outstanding characteristic of being their own. And the group would not only find more pleasure in the presenting of something which they felt to be their own production, but it would of necessity enter more deeply into their consciousness and become a richer part of their lives if it was their own. So, whenever at all practicable, the study should lead to the expression of the group's own conception in a drama which shall in special way be *their own.*

It may be necessary to add a single word of caution: of course there must be careful adult guidance in all the study, and especially in the preparation of the drama, lest the fancy or foible or hobby of some one or two members of the group be allowed to find too prominent expression in the drama. Religious drama should never be allowed to become the medium for the expression, and impression, of faddist views.

2. Reverence

A second essential, so important that it is a serious question whether it should not be placed first, is that everything in connection with church dramatization must be done in a spirit of reverence.

Church dramatization must be genuinely religious drama, and religious drama, like religious music, or religious expression of any kind, must be given in the attitude and spirit of real worship.

A Biblical drama or missionary pageant must never for an instant be thought of, either by participants or audience, as in any sense an entertainment. There may be bits of humor in it—the Bible has many choice bits of intensely interesting humor—there may be (almost must be) tensely dramatic scenes which grip the emotions of the audience; but always and everywhere there must be the consciousness of the fact that this is a service of worship. The drama or pageant may be presented out-of-doors in some beautiful grove or by some lakeside, or it may, following the example of the church leaders of centuries ago, be given in the church auditorium on Sunday evening; the place ought not to matter much, the atmosphere and spirit of reverence should be so constantly

present and so prominent in all the evening's program that even the most casual and careless observer will be compelled to recognize that " the place whereon he standeth is holy ground."

The unusualness of the special costumes, the strangeness of the " scenery," the emotional excitement of appearing in a strange rôle before one's intimate acquaintances and friends, all these have a tendency to create an emotional reaction on the part of the participants which may be disastrous to deeply spiritual impressions, unless——. And here is one of the most important matters for the pageant director; upon him (or her) devolves the responsibility for the keeping of that strong, deep, truly spiritual atmosphere through which alone the best results can be obtained.

The attitude of reverence, and the conception of the Biblical drama or missionary pageant as real worship, can be best secured through a constant emphasis on prayer. If, from the very start, each rehearsal is opened with prayer, either by the director or participated in by all, the group will come to the presentation on *the* night with a real conception of the fact that this is an expression of the dedication of their talents to Christ and is done as an expression of their love and loyalty to him and for the sake of making his message more fully known to others.

And then, when every one is ready, when all costumes have been arranged, and all " props " and " scenery " put in proper place, a quiet ten minutes in some " upper room " where, under the leadership of the director and the pastor of the church, the young people themselves pray for each other and for the waiting audience, asking that strength and wisdom may be given for the best possible presentation of the great truth which this drama or pageant is to portray—that is to enter upon the presentation with a true spirit of reverence and is almost certain to leave a deeply spiritual impression on both audience and participants.

Whatever else is omitted, reverence is a real essential.

3. Simplicity

One of the real dangers in church-drama work is the temptation to overelaborateness. There is a perfectly natural tendency to want to make each presentation as elaborate and ornate as possible, both in costuming, scenery, and setting. This perfectly natural temptation may perhaps come from the nature of the work and the associations of everything dramatic with the theater.

Sometimes we seem to want to " beat the theater at its own game," and give a dramatic presentation which for elaborateness of scenic settings, for beauty of costuming, and for general effectiveness is superior to anything the " movies " or the regular theaters have to offer.

There are two serious objections to this tendency to elaborateness. The first, and most obvious, is that it is difficult, if not entirely impossible for us to present in the church or in any parish-house hall, a dramatic production with anything like the elaborateness of the professional stage with its well-nigh limitless resources of time, talent, and money behind it. The average church presentation is always hampered by three things, lack of money for equipment, lack of time for proper development of settings, etc., and lack of professional talent to make proper settings, lighting effects, etc. Since these things are usually true, why attempt the well-nigh impossible?

The second objection to elaborateness, and the more subtle one with which to deal, is the fact that too often elaborate attempts at scenery, or costumes, or effects, are very likely to obscure the real message of the drama and thus defeat the very purpose of our work. If overelaborateness is sought, the chances are that the attention of the audience will be centered on those elaborate effects rather than on the significance of the message. And if that is true of the audience, it is likely to be even more true of the participants. For they, owing to the lack of sufficient number of real workers in the average church, must often be both actors and scene-shifters, performers and stage-hands, principals in the drama and costume committee as well. And elaborate effects naturally require time for preparation. And if time—much time—is put into the preparation of elaborate scenery or costumes, of course less time is available for the real study which is so essential to the real success of this phase of educational dramatics.

4. Correct Costumes

Whether we are to give a Biblical drama, a missionary pageant, or a special day program, it is of the utmost importance that the costumes be correct. They need not be elaborate, in fact, are much better when simple rather than ornate, but they must be correct.

The whole question of costumes for church drama is too complicated for more than a passing mention here. The chapters

on costumes in Miss Miller's " The Dramatization of Bible Stories," Miss Ferris' " Following the Dramatic Instinct," and especially in Miss Candler's " Drama in Religious Service " go into the matter with some detail. Particularly valuable is Miss Candler's suggestion that

> A costume library should be started early, and should be so kept as to be a constantly increasing source of inspiration and aid. Whatever else it may contain for the uses of any particular church group, it should have, from the beginning, the complete Tissot set, in color, or the Wilde Bible Pictures, which latter are conveniently numbered and indexed for costuming purposes.

In addition to the Tissot pictures, which are particularly valuable for their brilliant coloring, the modern Bible pictures of the Union Bible Pictures set, the Taylor pictures which the Curtis Publishing Co. has published in *The Ladies' Home Journal,* and many of the Copping pictures are very valuable for suggestions.

Instead of attempting to rent costumes for church dramas from professional costumers it will be found decidedly preferable to have a more or less permanent Costume Committee of some of the older ladies of the church to work in harmony with the Dramatic Director and the young people in the gradual development of a complete set of Oriental costumes which will be the property of the church and available for use at any time by any church group for any kind of church drama. Fortunately, so far as the Bible dramas are concerned, the same set of costumes, with very slight variations, may be made to serve for almost any of the Bible dramas likely to be presented by the average church group. Nor need these costumes be particularly expensive. If a group of the older ladies of the church may be willing to cooperate with the young people in the doing of the work of making the costumes, the simplest of materials, such as cheese-cloth, dyed in different shades, will be found very effective.

Here, again, we return to our first essential—*study.* The one most important thing in the matter of securing proper costumes for church drama is thorough study of the manners and customs of the time referred to in the drama. Given the willingness to study, the ability to secure the proper color effects through dying and a willingness and ability to do ordinary sewing, and there is no reason at all why any group in any church, however small, may not have correct costumes for any kind of church drama.

5. Proper Lighting

Very closely allied to the matter of correct costumes is the matter of lighting. Many an otherwise good pageant has been marred by too little, or too much, or inappropriate lighting.

Of course, the whole matter of correct and appropriate lighting for dramatic productions is one of technical skill which commands much thought and expert attention on the professional stage. And it may seem at first thought supremely audacious for a group of young people, entirely amateur in dramatic work, to attempt to do anything at all with so complicated a subject as correct stage lighting. But when it is remembered that it is not stage lighting with which we are concerned, and that we are not attempting to compete with the professional stage in any way, but are dealing with a different subject from different motives, it will be readily seen that some attention to the matter of lighting is of supreme importance, and that the same kind of effective simplicity may be in evidence in the realm of lighting as in costuming and scenery.

One of the first points to be remembered is that plenty of light is desirable. The audience must be able to see, not only the general picture—the tout ensemble, but even minor details, and especially the expression of the faces of the participants.

Another point of importance is that colored lights are a real help in producing dramatic and emotional effects when wisely used. It is obvious that great care must be exercised in the matter of the use of colors, that there must not be too sudden transitions from one to the other, but rather a gradual blending of one color into another. And it is also obvious that careful attention must be paid to the symbolism of color, and to the suggestiveness of certain colors, such as blue for night scenes, red for sunsettime, etc. It may sometimes be wise to use a white spot light on a blue scene in order to bring out into prominence the hero or heroine of the drama, but in church drama the spot light should be used rather sparingly. The colors most likely to be appropriate for church drama are: amber, for daylight scenes, and for general use (amber is preferable to white for general use, as it is softer and more restful to both the participants and the audience than glaring white) ; blue, for night scenes, and for expression of sadness and mourning; and red, or pink, for sunset and sunrise scenes and scenes in which conflict is to be suggested. Equipped with these three primary

colors many beautiful effects are possible as varying intensities of each are used, and one color is blended into another.

But the average young people's group in the average church may wonder just how it will be possible in the church auditorium (if church dramas are to be presented there) to get any color effects at all. Footlights seem, very naturally, out of place; there is usually no " proscenium arch " over the pulpit platform behind which to hide overhead lights; and very frequently, no side walls immediately at the sides of the platform behind which to hide the " bank " or " side " lights. And another difficulty, very frequently encountered, is the fact that the lights of the auditorium are controlled from a switch-board which is located at the opposite end of the room from the platform. These facts present real, but by no means insurmountable difficulties. " Bank " lights are easily made in strips with ordinary sheet tin for reflectors and may be erected at the sides of the platform without much trouble, concealed behind clumps of palms or ferns or specially hung curtains. These strips may contain electric bulbs of the three colors mentioned above, and can be connected by any electrician to a " dimmer," thus making possible control behind the scenes (which is very desirable) and gradual shifting of lights from one color to the other. This is practicable almost anywhere, except for the item of expense.

However, even this kind of arrangement is not always practicable, so an even simpler plan of lighting is suggested. The use of the ordinary stereopticon, or rather two stereopticons, offers one of the easiest and most simple solutions of the lighting problem. With slides of colored glass of the right colors in varying shades in the slide-carriers, and with one stereopticon in each corner of the church gallery, or at the back of the auditorium, if there is no gallery, it is quite possible to obtain remarkable lighting effects with very small expenditure of money, time, and effort. Unless the city ordinances governing lighting apparatus are unusually strict, any young man of ordinary intelligence, even without any electrical training, will be able to operate the stereopticon and follow the directions of the pageant director. Two stereopticons are preferable because of the difficulty of the shadows of the participants thrown back upon the background when one lantern is used. Two lanterns, properly placed, will kill the shadows and give more light. They should, of course, have lights of the same candle-power. A buzzer signal system from the director's station behind

the scenes to each lantern can be temporarily installed with little expense or difficulty.

It should go without saying that all lighting apparatus and both operators should be ready for business on the night of the dress rehearsal, in order that all lighting effects and color combinations may be thoroughly tested out before the final presentation. The importance of this is sometimes overlooked, with disastrous results.

6. Appropriate Music

A very real essential to the success of worship in drama is the right sort of music. Carefully chosen musical selections, both instrumental and vocal, presented between scenes and acts of a Biblical drama, or between the episodes of a pageant, not only fill up a bothersome gap in the presentation, but bridge that gap with a musical message which will be a real help in carrying over the thought of the scene just closed into the one which is to follow, and thus not only conserve the thought of the past scene, but prepare the audience for the coming message.

There is a wonderful opportunity in church drama for the heartiest of cooperation between the pageant director, the group of young people, and the choir director and his choir. Very frequently solos or trios or quartets sung behind the scenes between acts are most effective. The message of the music and the meaning of the words (if the singers enunciate correctly) are doubly effective, coming as they do to the audience as they sit in the darkened auditorium with no sight of the singers.

And the emotional value of the right kind of instrumental music may be realized in this connection as in few other opportunities in our worship services. To illustrate: It has been the privilege of the writer to study many audiences as they listen in perfect quiet to the beauty and appeal of an organ and violin rendition of the familiar hymn, "My Jesus, As Thou Wilt," immediately following Ruth's great declaration in the drama of "Ruth the Loving." After Ruth has spoken, with intense feeling, those wonderful words,

> Entreat me not to leave thee, nor to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried. Jehovah do so to me and more also, if aught but death part thee and me—

and Ruth and Naomi have started for Bethlehem together, and the lights have faded out, then, in the quiet of the darkness, the melody of violin and organ sounds out through the church, and the audience sits drinking it all in, and responding—not with vociferous hand-clapping, but with real emotion, and ofttimes with real dedication to the God whom Ruth came to know through her love for Naomi.

But the music must be *appropriate*. It need not be elaborate, there is little or no need of importing highly trained singers or instrumentalists for this service, but it must fit the spirit and the message of the drama or pageant.

And in pageantry much may be made of music as a vital part of the episodes of the pageant. Processionals and recessionals, when well trained, are not only beautiful, but add the beauty of rhythm and harmony to the inspiration of the spoken words and the acted message.

As a source for music for drama and pageant, one of the best lists available is given in one of the appendices of Miss Candler's splendid book, "Drama in Religious Service." In the average church, with a relatively untrained choir, appropriately chosen hymns will frequently be found preferable to the attempting of elaborate anthems. And there are few kinds of music more effective for use between scenes of a drama than familiar church hymns, played softly on the pipe-organ. Played thus, without the accompaniment of the words, many in the audience will be thinking the words as the music is played, and thus get even more of a message than when the words are sung.

It is vitally important that the choir director, and so far as is practicable, all the musicians, should have the opportunity to read carefully the entire drama or pageant, so that they may understand just what is expected of the music, and just how it may carry on the thought of the scene which it follows or of which it is a part. All the musicians should, if at all possible, be present in the brief service of prayer which just precedes the presentation, that they, as well as the participants, may begin the service in a true spirit of worship and reverence.

7. Significant Settings

Assuming that many Biblical dramas and missionary pageants will be presented in the church auditorium, with only the regular pulpit platform for a stage, the question of scenic setting becomes

one of real importance. If we are to present an Oriental drama, the ordinary pulpit background is, of course, inappropriate. Must we, therefore, have special scenery constructed to fit each drama or pageant which we are planning to give? Is it one of the essentials of church drama that we install a "little theater workshop" in the church basement as a permanent part of the church equipment? If this is really necessary, then it rather naturally follows that there are very many churches which will not undertake anything in the line of drama or pageantry because of the expense involved, the lack of artistic talent, and the unwillingness on the part of the church authorities to turn over any portion of the church building permanently for such a purpose. In most instances there is neither time, talent, nor money for the construction of elaborate "sets."

If worship in drama is to become a part of the regular program of many churches, as the writer believes it should, then the matter of scenic settings for the dramas and pageants must be made as simple as possible, rather than as elaborate as possible.

There is a question other than the one of finance and practicability involved in this matter of scenery. Is it really desirable in church drama to have carefully prepared, elaborate scenery for each act and scene? Or, is it just possible that elaborate scenery will detract from, rather than add to, the effectiveness of the dramatic message, and be a real detriment to the idea of worship in drama?

Remembering what has been said previously as to the vital importance of simplicity in all the matters pertaining to church drama, we shall find that it has special application just here. If scenery is to be used at all, it must, of course, be correct. It would never do, for instance, to have a representation of the front of an Oriental house—suggesting the home of Elimelech and Naomi in Bethlehem in the days of the Judges—made with elaborate representation of the large iron hinges of the later colonial days in New England. Yet exactly this was done in one instance in connection with the preparation for the drama of "Ruth the Loving."

The scenery for Biblical dramas can be very effective and at the same time very simple. Very many of the scenes of the Bible stories are located out-of-doors, and the suggestion of a grain-field by a few sheaves of yellow grain and some loose grain scattered over a brown or khaki-colored canvas on the floor will do wonders in transporting both participants and audience away from the

ordinary surroundings of the familiar church auditorium to the far-away land of Bible times.

But very often a drama or pageant will be most effective if given without any scenery at all. Of course, it is necessary to do some things to change the background from the ordinary prosaic pulpit surroundings. Probably the best, and certainly the most inexpensive, method of doing this is to arrange a background of curtains. A curtain in front of the platform may or may not be necessary—just as commonly, not—but a curtain at the back of the platform may truly be regarded as an essential. Dark gray flannel is both relatively inexpensive, durable, easily handled, and effective. Whatever material is used, care must be taken to provide enough material so that the curtain will hang in ample folds, and it must be of a neutral color so as to be restful to the eyes of the audience and to take the color effects of the lighting properly. A curtain of sufficient length to extend entirely across the pulpit platform, and a little over at each end if possible, and about nine or ten feet in height will be found an effective, inexpensive, and easily managed sort of background.

But the most important essential of all is the spirit in which the work is to be done. No one connected in any way with the work of worship in drama should for a moment be allowed to forget that this work is being done as an act of worship and for the sake of making the Father more perfectly known through a more complete knowledge of his word, or of bringing to the church a more complete knowledge of some outstanding need of the world for his light and love.

And one of the ways and means of doing this is to keep the spirit of *prayer* constant in all the planning and execution of any work of this sort. When the planning committee begins its work with a season of prayer at the very first meeting, seeking divine guidance in the selection of the material to be presented and the people to take the parts; when each participant as he begins to memorize his part does it with a prayer; when every rehearsal is begun or ended with prayer, and when the presentation is opened both behind the scenes and with the audience with a season of prayer, then that presentation will be in very truth worship in drama, and then will it be certain to accomplish real results in spiritual uplift.

V

DRAMATIC SCENES IN THE BIBLE

One of the perfectly natural questions which almost any group of young people is likely to ask in connection with this matter of a program of church drama is, " Where can we find material suitable for worship in drama? " And the first, and most obvious answer is, " in the Bible."

Objections

But there are two objections which are likely to be raised immediately. One is that there are no dramas in the Bible, and the other is that the Bible, as a book more than human in its origin, is too sacred to be used in such a way.

To the first of these objections there is one answer: Study the Bible, and you will find that while there may be few dramas in it (in the technical sense, although the greatest drama of literature is there—the book of Job), throughout the Bible there are very many dramatic scenes, particularly in the Old Testament, and that many of the stories of the New Testament lend themselves most naturally to arrangement and presentation in dramatic form. So the material is there.

With reference to the second objection, it is unquestionably true that the Bible is a book more than human in its origin, and that one of the very best descriptions of the Bible ever made is that contained in the title of Ian Maclaren's last book, " God's Message to the Human Soul." It is *God's* message; the Psalmist truly sang long ago of " *thy* word " as giving light. And this fact makes it all the more imperative that this word should have every possible opportunity to reach the souls for whom it was intended. It is all too true that for a great many people the Bible is a closed book—it speaks a language so different from their every-day conversation that it means very little to them on those rare occasions when they hear it read, or on those still rarer occasions when they casually turn its pages for themselves. And even those who have from childhood's days been familiar with its words, all too often they have merely *read* it, and seldom *seen* it. To far too many, even

of our church young people, the heroes and heroines of the Bible are not real people who really lived on this earth, met real temptations of actual life, and won real victories with no other help at their disposal than is available for every young man and woman today. On the contrary, to many of our own young people these Bible heroes and heroines are unreal, vague, and somewhat mythical characters about whom you read in the Bible, but who have no special relation to the present and the practical problems of real life.

Hence, anything which will take these great characters out of that mythical, mystical past and make them really live again—make them actual and real—fighting real temptations and winning real victories—anything which will do that is not only worth doing, but there is a real obligation resting upon the church to do it. If it is true that Biblical dramatization will not only give our church young people something worth while to do, but will at the same time actually make the Bible live for them as no other method of teaching can possibly do, then not only is Biblical dramatization permissible in the church, it is almost compulsory upon the church to undertake it.

Dramatic Material in the Old Testament

But somebody is already asking, "What are some of those dramatic scenes in the Bible?"

It will be well worth while to study briefly some of the familiar (and some not so familiar) scenes of the Old Testament to see how readily they lend themselves to presentation in dramatic form.

In the list which follows, the writer has constantly kept in mind the limitations of the ordinary, average church, both as to personnel and as to equipment and training, and has named only those scenes and stories which can be readily dramatized and presented by the average group with the average equipment—or lack of it. Nor is this list intended to be exhaustive, but rather suggestive. There is plenty more material in the Old Testament for this purpose than is here named, waiting to be "dug out" of its obscurity by some diligent students.

1. *Joseph,* either as a boy, dreaming of future greatness and making the whole family envious by his recounting of his dreams; or as a prisoner in Egypt; or as the Governor, magnanimous to the last degree toward those whose envy had so cruelly wronged him as a lad. Almost any portion of the life-story of Joseph, "The

Dreamer Who Made His Dreams Come True," lends itself admirably to dramatization and contains a strong challenge to faithfulness and loyalty in the midst of adverse conditions.

2. *Moses.* Certain scenes in the life of Israel's greatest statesman, particularly his call to service at the burning bush, his fellowship with his "minister," Joshua, his appearance with the Tables of the Law on his descent from Mount Sinai with "shining face," and his farewell address to the people, are so strongly dramatic as to make a deep and abiding impression upon the lives of the young people.

3. *Deborah the Prophetess.* The story of Deborah and her arousing of Barak to lead the children of Israel against Sisera is one of the outstanding instances in the Bible of the possibilities of feminine leadership. It might well be presented by a group of young women to impress the message of the place and power of women in religious leadership. It is rather too brief for a full evening's program, but may well be used for a special opening service in the Sunday school on "Girls' Day," or for a special young people's meeting.

4. *Ruth the Loving.* The story of Ruth has been called the most beautiful love-story in literature. Certain it is that one may search carefully and far among the literatures of the world and fail to find a sweeter, more unselfish, more "homey" story of life and love. Preeminently a story, it lends itself very beautifully to simple, yet most effective dramatization. Among all the Old Testament material for worship in drama the story of Ruth stands out as perhaps the very best of all with which to begin a program of church drama. It is so simple that the smallest church group may dare attempt it, so perfectly natural that little is required for scenic settings, except a few sheaves of yellow grain to suggest the field of Boaz, requiring so few principal characters that a young people's society or organized Sunday-school class with only a dozen or fifteen members may attempt it with confidence. Yet it is so deeply spiritual, so appealing in its simplicity, and so forceful in its message of love and loyalty to the highest and holiest ideals, that its message is sure to be remembered through many days, both by participants and audience.

5. *Jonathan and His Armor-bearer.* Among the frequently overlooked stories of the Old Testament is this one of Jonathan and the surprise of the Philistine garrison at Michmash. For inter-

mediate boys this story offers great possibilities. It is brief, simple, requiring few characters, but commanding in its challenge to daring action against heavy odds.

6. *Elijah the Uncompromising.* Possibly the most dramatic of all the Old Testament stories is that of Elijah and his sudden appearances and disappearances, his stern rebuke of the spirit of compromise so prevalent in his day, and his startling challenge to absolute, unswerving loyalty to Jehovah. This story offers to the group thoroughly interested in worship in drama a splendid opportunity for the exercise of all their talents of dramatic expression—of appropriate music, of remarkable lighting effects.

This story is by no means a task for beginners in church drama, but may be well worked up to through many previous presentations of simpler and briefer stories, as the appropriate climax of a year's work.

In the presentation of this story care must be taken to give, either through an appropriate introductory address, or in the first act of the drama itself, a clear impression of the dangers of compromise in Elijah's day. Both participants and audience must be helped to see the real significance of Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, King of Tyre and Priest of Baal, in her position of Queen of Israel. There must be a realization (much clearer than that ordinarily received from the mere reading of the story) of her determined attempt to win the nation over to Baal-worship and the dangers to Israel of the spirit of compromise manifested by Ahab and his courtiers.

It is in connection with this story of Elijah fully as much as with any other of the Bible stories that the first of the essentials referred to in another chapter must be observed. A thorough study of the backgrounds, political, religious, and social, of Elijah's time is very necessary to the proper presentation of the story of Elijah. But when time and attention are given to this essential, few stories are more rewarding. And there is hardly one in the Old Testament more compelling in its interest.

7. *Micaiah the Truthful.* Another of the overlooked stories which is appropriate for dramatic presentation is that of the Prophet Micaiah. One class of intermediate boys gave this drama in very acceptable manner as a church Sunday-evening service not long ago and found it not only very interesting, but also very helpful in its challenge to truthfulness.

8. *Isaiah the Statesman.* Prominent among all the great prophets of the Old Testament stands out Isaiah the Statesman. At least the first half of Isaiah's life and work offer splendid opportunities for church-drama work. The picture of King Uzziah in his pride attempting to usurp the office and work of the priest; the call of Isaiah to prophetic service, occurring in the same year as Uzziah's fall from his pedestal of hero-worship: the interview of Isaiah with Ahaz in the highway of the king's field; the fright of King Hezekiah and the people at the approach of the Assyrian army; the insolent demand of the Rabshakeh; and the striking and dramatic climax in the story of the deliverance of Jerusalem from the army of Sennacherib—all offer splendidly dramatic possibilities. These possibilities of dramatic setting and action give to Isaiah's sermons on social righteousness and trust in Jehovah intense interest and rare significance. This drama requires special preparation and unusual study, but will well repay any group for almost any amount of work which may be put into it.

9. *Nehemiah the Enthusiast.* The life-story of the man who tackled a tough task and won out at it in spite of all the opposition, has a wonderful appeal to all young people. While there are many difficulties in the way of its practical presentation in the average church, this story can be made a wonderfully effective drama.

10. *Esther the Daring.* One of the most practical and usable of the Old Testament stories for dramatic use is the story of Esther. It is quite naturally a drama, and requires very little alteration and arrangement to make it fit for young people's use in church drama. Into this story may very wisely be introduced some of the Psalms, such as the One Hundred and Thirty-seventh, the Forty-sixth, and the One Hundred and Twenty-sixth. While "Esther the Daring" lacks some of the deep spiritual emphasis of "Ruth the Loving," it has a wonderful appeal to the spirit of real patriotism and shows the possibility of the spirit of true courage.

11. *Judas Maccabeus.* Though relatively little known because he came into the period between the Old and New Testaments and because the books which tell the story of his achievements are in the little-read Apocrypha, the life of Judas Maccabeus deserves a wider acquaintance among the young people of our churches. And one of the best ways of securing this desirable result is to present his story in dramatic form. Naturally, very little of that

great struggle for religious and civil independence under Judas' leadership can be shown in a brief drama. But enough is practicable to give many people a new conception of those significant days "Between the Testaments" and a clearer understanding of the backgrounds of the New Testament.

12. *Job the Sufferer.* Last in the Old Testament list, but by no means least, we come to the one real drama of the Bible—a book which no less a literary authority than Thomas Carlyle has called "the greatest dramatic poem in all literature," the book of Job. It is so great a drama, so wonderful an argument, so marvelous a piece of literature, that it must be the climax of a long series of experiences in worship in drama. It may be approached only with fear and trembling by a group of average amateurs, and might well be presented only after months of careful, conscientious study and research. But it will well repay the patience and the effort. It contains some gems of Biblical literature, the knowledge of which is in itself a reward well worth the time and work. And, well presented, its effect upon an audience is deeply spiritual and truly helpful.

Such are some, though by no means all, of the Old Testament characters whose life-stories lend themselves most admirably to dramatic presentation in accordance with the spirit of worship in drama. In addition to these choice bits of biography available and waiting to be presented in dramatic form, there are splendid possibilities for worship in drama to be found in the songs of the Bible, especially the Psalms.

Some of the Psalms, like the One Hundred and Eighteenth, were written for and regularly used in worship which was intensely dramatic in its form. Hence, it is not at all difficult to use them in drama worship now.

Other Psalms, like the Twenty-fourth, were written for some special occasion of great joy, and it is not at all difficult to enact again some of the scenes of that great occasion of the long ago. The Twenty-fourth Psalm, as the Dedication Hymn, is made wonderfully vivid when sung by a procession of "priests" bearing the "ark" up to the gates of the city.

"The Hymn of the Helper" (Psalms 42 and 43) is presented in dramatic form in Part Two as one suggestion of the possibilities of this portion of Biblical material.

Dramatic Material in the New Testament

The New Testament does not offer as many opportunities for dramatic arrangement as does the Old, but it is by no means devoid of dramatic scenes.

Turning to the Gospels, we note first of all the dramatic incident of the visits of the Shepherds and the Magi to the Infant Christ. It would seem to be hardly necessary to sound any word of caution, but lest some might think it essential to the realism of the scene to have a real baby or at least a large-sized doll in the manger, the suggestion is offered that such attempts at ultra-realism are not only not necessary, but often introduce an element of grotesqueness into an otherwise solemn scene. One of the important points to be remembered in all church drama work is that the director's business is to *suggest* rather than to portray, in many instances. And in the dramatizing of the story of the Shepherds and the Magi, a strong light hidden in the straw of the manger and shining up into Mary's face as she bends over the manger, or looks up with wonder and surprise as the Shepherds or the Magi enter, is decidedly the most effective way of suggesting the presence of the Baby Jesus.

The Parables of Jesus. Many of the parables offer practical opportunities for dramatization. There are few things more appealing to the average class of junior boys than the acting out of the parable of the Good Samaritan. To be sure, there is likely to be some overdone acting on the part of the boys assigned to be the robbers, and the poor traveler is quite apt to endure some real suffering for a moment or two; but those boys will not soon forget that story, nor will those who are privileged to see it presented.

The Wise and Foolish Virgins offers to a class of young women a great opportunity to demonstrate the vital need of right preparation in youth for the coming of the Master into the life. A Scripture lesson acted out in this real, living way becomes a most wonderful introduction to a stirring sermon to young people.

These are only two of the many possibilities in these great stories of the Greatest Story-teller the world has ever known. Many others will commend themselves to the thoughtful leader of church drama.

Peter and Cornelius. This story of the first preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles is a very appropriate combination of Biblical

and Missionary Drama. The various steps in Peter's preparation for his unusual mission—the visit to Joppa as the guest of a tanner, the vision on the housetop, the well-timed arrival of the messengers from Cornelius, the company of Gentiles gathered in Cornelius' house awaiting Peter's arrival—all lend themselves most admirably to worship in drama.

Paul the Far-sighted. The life-story of the world's greatest missionary is full of thrillingly dramatic incidents. It offers one of the most striking opportunities in all the Bible for dramatic presentation. In fact, there is easily material enough in the life of Paul for not one but several dramas. One very interesting drama might be made out of the early section of his life, including his school days, his persecution of the Christians, his start for Damascus, and his conversion. A second drama might include some scenes of that first missionary journey, such as that synagogue scene at Antioch in Pisidia; an incident or two of the second journey, particularly the approach of Troas and the vision of the Man of Macedonia; the midnight praise-meeting in the Philippian jail; and the scene on Mars Hill in Athens. Still a third evening of thoroughly interesting drama might include the Farewell to the Ephesian Elders; the dramatic scene before King Agrippa, with that wonderful oration; a hint of the shipwreck; and a glimpse of the closing days in the Roman prison.

For any group of young people who will really study, the life of Paul offers the challenge of wonderful material for a whole winter's work of study and dramatic interpretation.

Thus it will be seen that all through the Bible there is a wealth of material all ready for dramatic interpretation—waiting to be used. And there are many wonderful gems of its literature which can be understood only when seen in a true dramatic setting, and which will be appreciated by even the casual listener very much more completely when presented in dramatic form than in any other way.

One elderly church-member remarked to her pastor one Sunday evening at the close of a very impressive presentation of the drama of "Ruth the Loving" in a country church,

"Pastor, I've read the book of Ruth a great many times before tonight, but now I'm going home to read it again, *and understand it.*"

VI

MAKING MISSIONS REAL THROUGH DRAMATIZATION

Remarkable progress has been made in the past two decades or so in making missions real. The use of stereopticon-slides and moving pictures has done wonders in bringing the conditions of life in far-away lands home to the church people of America. Illustrated missionary story papers and magazines have contributed in no small measure to the present largely increased knowledge of and interest in missionary lands and work. Mission-study classes and church schools of missions with graded text-books and well-organized curricula have accomplished wonders.

And yet, one wonders whether the needs and opportunities of missionary work in far lands are really *real* to fifty per cent. of the members of the average church. We are giving millions for kingdom work where in other days we gave only thousands, we have circulated tons of missionary literature (much of which gets buried under a mass of current literature on the center-tables); but is India a *real* country with *real* needs of the gospel message? Is the cry of burdened souls dying in the night of heathen darkness a real cry to our young people, even to those in our societies and missionary guilds?

We have conquered many of the strongholds of General Indifference, but there are other places yet to be won. And missionary dramatization is one of the most convenient, most accessible, and most effective ways of doing it which has yet been devised.

Available Material

The presentation of missionary plays and pageants has become so common that it is the unusual church which has not at some time attempted something along this line. The list of available material ranges from the very simplest form of dialogue to the complex and spectacular pageant which demands the services of a trained and salaried director, the cooperation of many churches, and the employment of hundreds of people. Practically every country in which the churches of America are doing missionary work is represented in the plays and pageants available.

The Department of Missionary Education, 276 Fifth Avenue, New York, has recently done a very great service to the churches, and especially to the leaders of young people's missionary groups, in the publication of a new leaflet entitled "Plays and Pageants." This leaflet lists under the various countries in which this denomination is doing work all the available missionary dramatic material which may be had at the time of the publication of the leaflet. Thus it makes a handy reference library of practically all the best material which leaders of young people's groups, in Sunday school, young people's societies, mission circles, guilds, etc., will be likely to need.

Values of Missionary Dramatization

The presentation of a play or pageant at the conclusion of the six weeks' period of a church school of missions is becoming quite the regular thing. It condenses into a single evening, or perhaps into a single half-hour, the salient features of the six weeks' study, and presents in a more real and vivid manner than any other method the real needs of the land or group which has been studied and the best ways of meeting those needs.

Another of the great values of missionary dramatization is the influence which it has upon the young people who take part in such plays and pageants, with reference to the call for volunteers for missionary service. To many a somewhat thoughtless young person there has come, through some part in a missionary play or pageant, a sudden realization of the great need for reenforcements all along the far-flung battle-line of the kingdom forces, and the result has been a new Life Service Recruit or Student Volunteer. If missionary dramatization can not only acquaint people with the needs of the gospel in all lands, both here at home and in the far countries of earth, but can also arouse them actually to volunteer for service in the Master's name anywhere he may need them most, then missionary dramatization is emphatically worth while and ought to be encouraged in every church.

Costumes

In addition to the splendid service rendered by the Department of Missionary Education, mentioned above, it is also helping out the churches which are interested in missionary dramatization in another way, by the renting of missionary costumes. It is

rather more difficult to secure the correct costumes for the people of India, China, Japan, or the islands of the sea, than it is to make a set of costumes for Bible dramas. Of course, it is relatively easy to procure a number of kimonos and think we have effectively costumed a Japanese play, but what do most of us know about particular styles of kimonos for particular classes or occasions? And how can we be expected to know how (even if we have seen a few pictures of natives of India or Assam or China) to costume correctly in every detail a play of India, or Burma, or Assam? So it is a joy to record that this particular worry for pageant directors is eliminated. All one has to do is simply to send (far enough in advance of the pageant date to avoid being disappointed) an order for the particular costumes needed for such and such a play. And in plenty of time for the dress rehearsal they are delivered, neatly packed and everything properly tagged. And all this for a very small fee for rental!

It is obvious that the same principles of study, of reverence, of appropriate music and correct lighting which apply to the presentation of Biblical dramas, must apply also to missionary plays and pageants. For missionary drama as well as Biblical drama ought to be worship in drama—that and naught else. If a missionary play is given merely to entertain, or even to inform, it has missed its opportunity. Different from Biblical drama in its content, and perhaps slightly different in its immediate purpose, missionary drama must be given in the true spirit of genuine worship, or it fails. Whether given on Sunday evening in the church auditorium, or on a week-night in the basement or social hall, if it deserves a place in the church's program of work at all, it should be opened with prayer, continued in a devotional atmosphere, and closed with prayer. Only thus can its real object, the dedication of life to Christian service, be attained.

VII

PAGEANTS FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Difficulties, and the Way Out

"Oh, these special days! They're such a nuisance. It seems as if we hardly get through rehearsing for one and get the thing over, before we have to start right in on the next. And the children are *so* hard to get to come to rehearsals! And every child has *got* to have a piece, and Mary Jones' piece is just a little bit longer than Martha Smith's, or if it comes first on the program and Martha's away down near the end, there is no end of trouble. And Christmas! That's just the worst of all—*such* a job getting the candy-bags filled and the tree decorated, and seeing that there is some kind of a present for everybody, and teasing Mr. Hold-back to be Santa Claus again—why, it's just a regular nightmare!"

Of course, this is not a court reporter's record of testimony of the witness-stand, and it may not be the whole truth, but it is certainly the composite photograph of the inward, if not outward, expressions of very many special days committee members in many Sunday schools and churches.

But why, oh, why, should special days, like Christmas and Easter and Rally Day and Children's Day, be such a nightmare? Why should there be trouble so often over the pieces the children speak? Why should Mr. Hold-back have to be teased to be Santa Claus—why should they be any Santa Claus, anyway? Isn't this supposed to be a *religious* institution, a church, at its task of the teaching ministry? Why should Santa Claus have so prominent a part in a Sunday school's observance of Christmas, and the Christ, whose birthday is being celebrated, be given far less prominence than this mythical Saint Nicholas?

Why? Perhaps because "our church" has not yet realized the privilege of pageantry, and the effective solution appropriate pageants offer to the problems of special days.

But let no one think for a moment that there are no problems and no work (yes, and worries, too) in connection with a special day pageant. Oh, yes, there is plenty of work, there are many and very real problems, but there is abundant compensation.

One of the troubles with the ordinary type of special day program is that there is no unity to it—no true progression until a real climax is reached, no particularly worth-while message to it. And, naturally, the committee which has worked so hard against real obstacles, feels sort of hopeless and discontented when it is all over, because "it didn't seem to get anywhere."

Into the midst of our despair over the problems of our special days there is gradually breaking the dawn of a new day, a new day which is to redeem our great church festivals (in the Sunday school's observance of them) from the thraldom of the commonplace, the cheap, and the tawdry. More and more are our schools and churches breaking away from the time-honored (?) custom of sending away to as many publishers as possible to secure samples of exercises, shuffling them all up, and pulling out of the heap a recitation from this one, a song from that, and an exercise from the other, and feeling that this unethical method was perfectly all right because it was done for a religious organization. More and more we are coming to a recognition of the importance of dignity in our special observances, and we are finding in pageantry a way out of our difficulties.

A wisely chosen pageant is, without question, the best sort of special day program for any school, large or small. Of course, the small school can hardly attempt the elaborate productions which are given with relative ease by the large school. But with care in the choosing of a pageant appropriate to the school which is to give it, and with ordinary ability available for the direction of the pageant, it is entirely safe to predict that a real impression will be made on everybody—members, teachers, officers, and visitors.

Some Special Day Pageants

As an indication of the possibilities in the line of pageantry for special day observance, study that great Christmas pageant, "The Light of the World," by Prof. H. Augustine Smith. This is a remarkably effective combination of the Christmas observance with the missionary motif. The prophecy that "in the fulness of the time" the fuller Light should dawn; the beautiful picture of the Mother bending over the manger cradle, and singing that wonderful lullaby, "Sleep, My Little Jesus"; the coming of Shepherds and Magi to worship and to present their gifts; the appearance of the Spirit of Christianity and her lighting her candle at the manger

light, then her summoning of the messengers to bear that Light afar; their going and returning, each with his group who bow in adoration around the manger cradle, and then rise to signify by upraised candles their determination to spread the light till darkness shall be forever banished and the Babe of Bethlehem shall become in truth King of kings and Lord of lords—Who that has seen this wonderful pageant, and especially who that has had the privilege of taking even a minor part in it, would ever care to come down from the mountain height of dramatic beauty and effectiveness to the drivel of the ordinary Christmas exercise?

Or, at Eastertime, when a church and school have united in a worthy presentation of that remarkably beautiful pageant, "The Dawning," by L. R. Bayard, and have seen and felt the wonder of the change from doubt to questioning hope, and then to certain sure belief, saying, "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon," then there can be no question about anything else than a worth-while pageant for Easter.

Or, perhaps, there is a real need for a church vacation school in the church, and only a very tiny group of the leaders sense that need, while the great mass of the church are either indifferent or hostile. Suppose, under these conditions, on the evening of Children's Day, a real C. V. S. pageant like "The Triumph of Happiness" in (Mr. Gage's new C. V. S. text-book) were presented. Even the most indifferent could hardly help being interested, and even the hostile would be compelled to admit that there really is something in this vacation-school idea, after all. And thus worship in drama becomes both a means and method of true worship and at the same time a means of selling to the church a new method of religious education which is really needed by every church.

Pageants at Church Anniversaries

There is one opportunity for church use of pageantry which is almost entirely overlooked—the observance of church anniversaries. This is the more strange, as the modern revival of pageantry had its beginning and has had its largest and most elaborate expressions in community cooperation in great historical pageants like the famous "Pageant of the Pilgrims" given in connection with the Tercentenary Celebration at Plymouth in 1921. Historical pageants are quite the common thing in connection with any community,

State, or national anniversary, but how common are they in connection with the fiftieth or the seventy-fifth or the centennial anniversary of a church?

Many churches celebrate such anniversaries with preparations and splendid programs, often prepared at great expense. But how often do the young people of the church and the school have any share in the program other than the privilege of attending extra services and listening to lengthy and often prosaically detailed addresses by men of whom they have heard little if anything?

On the other hand, what an opportunity is presented by the coming of a seventy-fifth anniversary to get the young people of the church studying with keen interest its history and the crises in its career, in order that they might have worthy part in a great historical pageant, living over again the great days of their own church's history!

Here is a relatively new phase of religious pageantry, local church history, which offers a wide open door of opportunity to any pastor who has the vision and the courage to do something different with and for his young people.

And for the special days—Christmas, Easter, Children's Day, Rally Day, and Thanksgiving—to say nothing of patriotic Sundays and Mothers' Day, and all the rest—pageantry offers dignity, beauty, charm, effectiveness in delivering the real message of these days coupled with the cooperative effort, combined energy, and consecrated enthusiasm of youth.

VIII

SOURCES OF MATERIAL

Perhaps one may suppose, yes, even assume, that readers who have had the stick-to-it-ive-ness to follow thus far in this discussion, will have made up their minds by this time that they will try it at least once, at any rate. If it works—well, may be they'll try again. If it doesn't—well, the author and the publisher are to blame for getting us into the scrape.

And when somebody has made up his mind to try it out, just once, remember—why, then, that somebody wants to know just one thing right at the start. There will be a thousand and one things he will want to know before he gets through with even that once—but right at the start he wants to know one thing—where he can procure the necessary drama to start with. Assuming that this Mr. Ordinary Church-member is absolutely sure, even after reading all that the writer has said about the wisdom of a group preparing their own drama, that he never in the wide world could do such a thing as write a drama, much less a pageant, it is quite important that somebody, somewhere, should be able to answer his question and put him in touch easily and practically with some source of supplies of pageants and dramas. Such is the only excuse for existence for this chapter. Very naturally, it reflects the opinions of the writer and reveals the limitations of his knowledge. There are doubtless almost, if not quite, as many titles left out which some other writers would have inserted as he has put in. The list is prepared with the average church group in mind—the little group with only average ability and average leadership. It is hoped that the list may prove practical.

Reference Books for Leaders

" Drama in Religious Service," by Martha Candler. The Century Co. $3.00.

This book of 259 pages is probably the most elaborate treatise on this subject. Its twelve chapters give much detailed direction as to " The Production Plant," " The Coordinated Arts of the

Theater Applied to Pulpit and Chancel," etc. Its Appendices are especially valuable, containing a wealth of reference material.

"Pageantry and Dramatics in Religious Education," By W. V. Meredith. The Abingdon Press.

Mr. Meredith has given us a very helpful discussion of the backgrounds of religious drama and some of the reasons for its wide appeal. It offers a splendid text for a study class in the training of directors of church drama.

"Following the Dramatic Instinct," by Anita B. Ferris. The Pilgrim Press.

This little book of only seven chapters is a most concise, practical, and helpful reference-book for the beginner in the work of religious drama. Miss Ferris has packed into the small compass of about 100 pages a great deal of practical material.

"The Production of Religious Drama," by The Commission on Church Pageantry and Drama of the Dept. of Religious Education of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Dept. of Missions, 281 Fourth Ave., New York.

The subtitle of this little paper-bound book is "A Primer." If this is a primer, it is just what most workers in the amateur field of religious drama need. This Commission, headed by Dr. P. E. Osgood, of Minneapolis, has evidently done some thorough research work, and at the same time some intensely practical things. Fully as much as any other book, this one emphasizes the matter of religious drama as real worship, and urges the presentation of worthy religious dramas within the chancel of the church itself. Even though one may own all the other reference books, it will be found well worth while to own this one also.

"The Dramatization of Bible Stories for Children," by Elizabeth Miller. Univ. of Chicago Press.

This was one of the earliest books on religious-drama work and still holds its place as perhaps the standard in its particular field. This book is of special help to the workers with juniors. It is thorough, practical, and definitely religious. Every junior worker should have this book and its very recent companion volume, the one next named.

" Dramatization in the Church School," by the same author. Based upon the earlier book, this offers a course of studies in religious-drama work for the training-class.

Other books of a general nature like " Educational Dramatics," by Emma S. Fry; " The Kingdom of the Child," by Alice M. Herts; " English Religious Drama," by Katharine Lee Bates; and " Pageants and Pageantry," by Esther W. Bates, will be found very helpful for side reading.

Available Bible Dramas

As previously stated, the following list is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather suggestive. It attempts to list some of the wealth of material which is available today. In most instance the dramas listed are those of which the writer has personal knowledge, either through the actual use of them in church presentations, the witnessing of them as directed by others, or the careful reading of the material.

" Biblical Dramas," by Hale and Hall. Pilgrim Press.

A series of little pamphlets—not really dramas intended to be acted, but rather dialogues intended to be read. They will make a good starting-point for a real program of church drama.

" Dramatized Bible Stories for Young People," by Mary M. Russell. George H. Doran Co.

A good collection of very brief dramas, intended rather as introductory to a sermon than as a whole service. They will be found especially valuable for intermediate and senior young people. The book contains thirteen dramas.

" The Good Samaritan," by Edna Earle Cole. R. G. Badger Co.

This book is much like the one just named, a collection of brief dramatizations. It is particularly adapted to juniors.

" Bible Plays " and " Shorter Bible Plays," by Rita Benton. Abingdon Press.

These are intended for the younger children, are beautifully gotten up and well illustrated. If one prefers the prepared dramas for children to those which are their own spontaneous reaction to the story, these books will be found helpful.

"The Rock," by Mary Hamlin. Pilgrim Press.

An elaborate production based on the story of Peter. It is a careful character study and will be found to be very interesting.

"The Drama of Isaiah," by Eleanor Wood Whitman. Pilgrim Press.

Another elaborate production, very effective when well done, but requiring rather more technical skill than the average church group possesses.

"The Sin of Ahab," by Anna Jane Harnwell; "Judas Iscariot," by Charlotte Gleason; "Children of Israel," by Tracy D. Mygatt. G. H. Doran Co.

These three dramas are called "The Drama League Series," as they are all prize dramas in a contest conducted by the Drama League of America. They are all excellent productions and very well written. They are intended rather for the advanced drama group than for beginners, but when well rendered by a group capable of thorough work, they will be most effective.

"Star of the East," by Anna J. Harnwell. Samuel French Co.

Another of the Drama League prize plays. This one is based on the story of Esther.

"The Drama of Esther." Y. W. C. A. Press.

A good arrangement of this remarkable story, prepared by a class in religious pedagogy in the National Y. W. C. A. Training School.

"Ruth the Loving," by Charles A. Boyd. Pilgrim Press.

"Esther the Daring," by Charles A. Boyd. Judson Press.

Christmas Pageants

"The Light of the World," by Prof. H. Augustine Smith. Century Co.

First presented in Tokio, Japan, at the World's Sunday School Convention, and since given many times in many cities in America, this is one of the most elaborate and impressive of all the Christmas pageants. It is usually given with from 150 to 300 participants,

but may be given with as few as fifty. It needs the setting of a beautiful church auditorium or a great hall to make it most effective. Any large church can do it, and will find real joy in the doing.

"Why the Chimes Rang," by Elizabeth A. McFadden. Samuel French Co.

This is a very beautiful pageant or play of one act, which can be given with only one setting, and which requires only four speaking parts and a number of others in pantomime. It is sufficiently elaborate for the largest church, yet can be given very simply in a small church.

NOTE. This play can be given only upon the payment of a royalty to the publishers of five dollars for presentations where no admission is charged, and ten dollars when there is an admission fee.

"Coming to the Christ," by Charles A. Boyd. The Judson Press.

A simple and easily presented combination of the missionary message with the Christmas story.

Easter Pageants

"The Dawning," by Rev. L. R. Bayard. Pageant Pub. Co., Los Angeles.

A most effective pageant, requiring a large number of participants, most careful rehearsing and costuming. It is one of the most impressive Easter pageants ever written, and has been given in many churches in successive years.

It offers a beautiful combination of effort between the choir and the group of participants, as the music of this pageant is one of its main features.

"The Resurrection," by O. G. Herbrecht. Practical S. S. Co., Chicago.

Much simpler than "The Dawning," requiring a smaller number of people and less work, is this "devotional interpretation."

Miscellaneous Material

Consult the lists of "Plays and Pageants for Church and Parish House" issued by the Methodist Episcopal Church Com-

mittee on Conservation and Advance, 740 Rush St., Chicago, Ill.; The Book Store, Church Missions House, Leaflet No. 3095, 281 Fourth Ave., New York; Drama League of New York, 29 West Forty-seventh St., New York; The Woman's Press, 600 Lexington Ave., New York.

"The God of the Out-of-Doors," by Robert Francis Allen. Judson Press.

As the title indicates, this is an outdoor pageant emphasizing the finding of God in his world. It is peculiarly appropriate for presentation at summer assemblies, conventions, etc. It requires one principal character with good powers of memorization as "The Preacher" has a long speech written in blank verse.

"The Lamp," by Anita B. Ferris. Westminster Press.

Presents in a very striking and effective manner the program of modern religious education. It might very well be a community effort and given in a large way.

"The Challenge of the Children," by Charles A. Boyd. Judson Press.

In a simpler manner, this pageant attempts to do the same sort of thing as "The Lamp." It is confined entirely, however, to the children's division of the modern Sunday school, and attempts to set forth the contrast between the Sunday school of yesterday and the modern church program for the children.

"The Pilgrim and the Book," by Percy Mackaye. Am. Bible Society.

Especially appropriate for Thanksgiving-time, but effective at any season of the year, this fine pageant gives a new impression of the value of the Bible, not only to the Pilgrim of 1620, but to the pilgrims of all the days. Though somewhat elaborate, it was presented with great success by a class of older boys in one church.

"The City Beautiful," by Prof. Augustine Smith. Century Co.

Especially appropriate for a community effort, this pageant brings out clearly the need of the modern city for the presence of Christ in the midst and the acknowledgment of him as its true Head and Ruler, the crowning of him as Lord of all. Seventy-five to one hundred people may easily be used in this production.

PART II

THE WHAT

AN INTRODUCTORY WORD

We now turn from our discussion of the Why and the How to an examination of some specimens of the What of Church Drama.

The specimens which follow in this Part of the book are intended to demonstrate the possibilities of this subject in each of its phases as discussed in Chapters V, VI, and VII. It will be noticed that Chapter IX contains a group of Biblical dramas in demonstration of what has been said in Chapter V, Chapter X has reference to Chapter VI, and Chapter XI to Chapter VII's argument for pageants for special days.

Among the five Biblical dramas will be found different types of material, suited to different needs. The Psalm Dramatization is so simple that any group which has never attempted anything along this line might wisely use it: the "Micaiah the Truthful" can be given with good results by a class of intermediate boys; the "Isaiah" will be effective if you have only one really good speaker; while "Elijah the Uncompromising," on the other hand, requires a good bit of training, experience, and ability on the part of a large number. And "Paul the Far-Sighted" can be given only by a group in which there is one man of marked ability in memorization and acting.

The Missionary Material does not attempt to portray particular countries or needs, but rather aims at being inspirational in a general way and tries to bring a real challenge to all young people as to the importance of the deduction of time, talents, money, and life to the work of the spreading of the Light.

The Christmas pageant which is included is intended to show the intimate connection between the Old Testament prophecy of the coming of the Light, the New Testament account of his coming, and the present-day need of that Light in all conditions of modern life.

All of this material is intensely practical—that is, it is capable of being used by all sorts of church groups, in all sorts of churches. Whether there is a well-developed church drama committee and a good stock of properties and paraphernalia, or only a determination to begin and little or nothing to begin with, these dramas and

pageants can be used. On the other hand, if there is a desire for something big, as is so often the case, there is nothing to prevent an experienced pageant director taking any of the pageants included in Chapters X and XI, or at least two of the dramas, and making them just as elaborate as time, talents, and money will permit. While anything included in this Part II can be given with fifty people or less, a majority of these selections can easily use as many as seventy-five participants if so many are available.

IX

BIBLICAL DRAMAS

1. MICAIAH THE TRUTHFUL

A BIBLICAL DRAMA IN FOUR SCENES

SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1. Before the Gate of Samaria. The Kings of Israel and Judah with Attendants. Kings clad in robes of state, seated on thrones on either side of the gate. The Prophets of Jehovah urge attack upon Ramoth.

SCENE 2. Prison Cell. Micaiah the Prophet in prison. Messenger from the King summons him to appear before the Kings, and counsels a reply which will please the King.

SCENE 3. Before the Gate of Samaria. Micaiah the Truthful before the Kings. Prophesies disastrous end of expedition against Ramoth. Is recommitted to prison.

SCENE 4. Gate of Samaria. Messenger from the battle-field, bringing news of the death of King Ahab.

CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

King Ahab of Israel, with four Attendants.
King Jehoshaphat of Judah, with four Attendants.
Prophets of Jehovah, led by Zedekiah. (Preferably at least ten.)
Crowd of Inhabitants of Samaria. (Indefinite number.)
Eunuch.
Micaiah the Truthful.
Watchman.
Messenger from Battle-field.

Scenery

Scene 1. The Wall of Samaria—with wide gateway. Wall should be about seven or eight feet high on either side of gateway. Over gateway a parapet about two feet higher than rest of wall. Gateway should be arched; about eight feet wide by seven feet high in center. Thrones of the Kings: armchairs draped with purple or crimson coverings (Oriental couch covers will do) upon raised platforms on either side the gate. The wall may be constructed of gray building paper or canvas, lined to represent large stones and tacked upon a wooden framework.

Scene 2. Interior of low, narrow, prison cell. Walls of cell may be made in same way as wall of Samaria. Scene should show cell as though the wall on one side were removed. Barred door of cell at left. Dim light.

Scene 3. Same as Scene 1.

Scene 4. Same as Scene 1, with thrones removed. Gate closed at beginning of scene.

Costumes

Kings: purple or scarlet robes, over ordinary Jewish undergarments.

Eunuch: ordinary Jewish costume, distinguished from rest by elaborate turban and girdle.

Soldiers and Kings' Attendants: short tunic, with light-colored, short trousers.

Prophets: ordinary Jewish costume, with mantle or cape over shoulders.

Zedekiah: more elaborate mantle than others; horns (for Scene 3) made of cardboard.

Micaiah: very simple costume; no mantle.

Messenger: robe tucked in at girdle; short, light-colored trousers.

Women of Crowd: ordinary Jewish women's robes, white, with varicolored scarfs and girdles.

SCENE 1

(*Sound of trumpet. Enter four soldiers through gateway. Enter* KINGS AHAB *and* JEHOSHAPHAT, *followed by four* ATTENDANTS *and crowd of inhabitants of city.* KINGS *take places upon thrones.*)

KING AHAB (*to* JEHOSHAPHAT) : Knowest thou that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, yet we keep silence and take it not out of the hand of the King of Syria?

KING JEHOSHAPHAT: Yea, I know that it is even as thou hast said.

KING AHAB: Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth in Gilead?

KING JEHOSHAPHAT: Behold, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses. But is this expedition one with the favor of Jehovah our God? Inquire thou at this time, I pray thee, for the word of Jehovah concerning the matter.

KING AHAB (*to* ATTENDANT) : Summon for me the Prophets of Jehovah. (ATTENDANT bows *and withdraws into the city.*)

(*Enter group of* PROPHETS OF JEHOVAH, *led by* ZEDEKIAH.)

KING AHAB (*to* PROPHETS) : My brother, the King of Judah, and I would fain know the word of Jehovah. Shall I go against Ramoth in Gilead to battle, or shall I forbear?

PROPHETS (*in unison, led by* ZEDEKIAH) : Go up, for Jehovah will deliver it into the hand of the King.

(AHAB *turns to* JEHOSHAPHAT *with an air of triumph.* JEHOSHAPHAT, *very thoughtful, seems not quite satisfied.*)

KING JEHOSHAPHAT: But is there no other prophet of Jehovah, that we may inquire of him?

KING AHAB: What, art thou not yet satisfied, my brother? Lo, here are all these prophets of Jehovah, and have they not spoken even as one man, saying, Go up, for Jehovah will deliver it into the hand of the king? What word wouldst thou have more? But since thou art not satisfied with even this, I will tell thee: yea, there is yet one man by whom we may inquire of Jehovah, Micaiah, the son of Imlah. (*Frowns.*) But I hate him, for he prophesieth

nothing good concerning me, but only evil. And he is even now in the prison for the evil things he hath said against me and against my house.

(*To* EUNUCH.) Fetch quickly Micaiah the son of Imlah.

(EUNUCH *salutes and withdraws. Curtain.*)

SCENE 2

(*Prison cell.* MICAIAH *pacing back and forth. Dim light. Noise of jingling keys outside. Enter* EUNUCH *at barred door of cell. Opens door and calls to* MICAIAH.)

EUNUCH: Ho, Micaiah, thou son of Imlah! Behold, King Ahab hath sent to fetch thee out of the prison!

(MICAIAH *follows* EUNUCH *out of cell to center of platform in front of cell.*)

Listen, now, thou Prophet of Jehovah! I will tell thee why the King hath sent for thee. Lo, King Ahab hath a royal visitor, King Jehoshaphat, from Jerusalem. And our King hath conceived the notion that this will be the very time to make an expedition against Ramoth in Gilead and recover that city which he hath lost. And now, behold, both Kings are seated upon thrones in the broad space before the gate of the city, and King Jehoshaphat hath asked that they might enquire of Jehovah concerning this expedition. So King Ahab hath summoned the Prophets of Jehovah. And with one voice they have all said unto the Kings, "Go up against Ramoth, for Jehovah will deliver it into the hand of the king."

See thou now, Micaiah, thou hast not been in the number of the King's friends. Even until now hath he cast thee into prison. Now then, do thou take this chance to get thee into the favor of the King. Only do thou as all the others have done, prophesy good fortune for the Kings, and then all shall be well with thee. Then shalt thou be numbered among the King's friends, and then shalt thou be delivered from prison, and blessing and prosperity shall be thine.

MICAIAH (*sternly*): As Jehovah liveth, I am a prophet of Jehovah, and neither for thee, nor for the King, nor for any man, will I speak soft words, that I might please men, and that I might be found in the number of the King's friends. But that which Jehovah saith unto me, that will I speak.

SCENE 3

(*Before the city gate.* PROPHETS *prophesying before the* KINGS.)

ZEDEKIAH (*fitting horns to his head, pushes with horns one and another of the* PROPHETS) : Behold now, O King, even as I push these my brethren with these horns of iron, Thus, saith Jehovah, even thus and thus shalt thou push the Syrians until they be consumed.

(*Enter* EUNUCH *and* MICAIAH.)

EUNUCH (*to* KING AHAB) : Behold, O King, Micaiah, the son of Imlah, for whom thou didst send.

KING AHAB (*to* MICAIAH) : Micaiah, shall we go up to Ramoth in Gilead to battle, or shall we forbear?

MICAIAH (*in very sarcastic tone*) : Yea, go up and prosper! Yea, Jehovah will deliver it into the hand of the King!

KING AHAB: How many times must I adjure thee that thou speak unto me nothing but the truth in the name of Jehovah?

MICAIAH: I saw all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And Jehovah said, These have no master, let them return every man to his house in peace.

KING AHAB (*to* JEHOSHAPHAT, *angrily*) : Did not I tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but only evil?

MICAIAH: Therefore hear thou the word of Jehovah. I saw Jehovah sitting upon his throne and all the host of heaven standing before him on his right hand and on his left. And Jehovah said, "Who shall deceive Ahab so that he will go up and fall at Ramoth in Gilead?" And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit and stood before Jehovah and said, "I will deceive him." And Jehovah said unto him, "Wherewith?" And he said, "I will go forth and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets." Now therefore, behold, Jehovah hath now put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and Jehovah hath spoken evil concerning thee.

ZEDEKIAH (*striking* MICAIAH *on the cheek*) : Which way went the Spirit of Jehovah from me to speak unto thee?

MICAIAH (*to* ZEDEKIAH): Behold, thou shalt see on that day when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself.

KING AHAB (*to* EUNUCH): Take Micaiah and carry him back unto Amon the Governor of the city and to Joash the King's son, and say unto them, Thus saith the King: Put this fellow in prison, and feed him with the bread of affliction and with the water of affliction until I return in peace.

MICAIAH: If thou dost indeed return at all in peace, Jehovah hath not spoken by me. (*To the crowd.*) Hear, ye people, all of you!

(*Curtain.*)

SCENE 4

(*The wall of Samaria. Gate closed.* WATCHMAN *upon wall, over the gate.*)

WATCHMAN (*to* PORTER *behind gate*): Open quickly! Behold, I see a messenger coming from the battle. He runneth swiftly, but I cannot tell whether he bringeth good tidings or ill.

(*Gate is thrown open; people crowd through gateway and await arrival of* MESSENGER. *Enter* MESSENGER, *out of breath as though from long run.*)

WATCHMAN (*to* MESSENGER): Bringest thou tidings from the battle? Are they good or evil tidings?

MESSENGER: Alas, alas, the tidings are evil! Woe unto us because of this day! Verily the vision of Micaiah the Prophet was a true one, for it hath come to pass this day even as he said; the armies of Israel and of Judah are indeed scattered abroad upon the mountains like sheep not having a shepherd.

VOICE FROM CROWD: What! Hath our King been slain?

MESSENGER: Yea, alas, it is even so! He disguised himself when he went into the battle, and at the first the charioteers of Syria fought only with Jehoshaphat, thinking that he was the King of Israel. But a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and the arrow smote our King between the joints of his armor, so that the blood ran out of the wound upon the floor of the chariot. And at evening he died. And when it became known throughout the

army that the King was dead, they cried, Each to his own city and each to his own land, for the King is dead! So they have scattered everywhither. And some are bringing the body of the King to bury it in Samaria. Alas, alas, it is an evil day! Would that the King had heeded the message of Micaiah!

(*Curtain.*)

2. ELIJAH THE UNCOMPROMISING

Synopsis

Act I. Scene 1. A Fatal Alliance. The throne-room of the palace of Ethbaal, King of Tyre.

Scene 2. A Dangerous Compromise. The palace of Ahab, in Samaria.

Act II. Scene 1. A Lonely Messenger. Elijah in Gilead.

Scene 2. A Royal Message. Throne-room of Ahab's palace.

Act III. Jehovah's Care. The home of the Widow of Zarephath.

Act IV. Scene 1. The Command of Jehovah. Roadside near Samaria.

Scene 2. Tottering Knees. Mount Carmel.

Scene 3. A Threat of Evil. Ahab's palace.

Act V. Scene 1. Under the Juniper Tree.

Scene 2. On Mount Horeb.

Directions for Lighting Effects

Note. The best effect is produced by the use of two incandescent bulb stereopticons, one for flood light, one for spot light. Colored glass or celluloid in the slide-carriers will give desired color effects. If stereopticon screen can be used as front curtain, curtain pictures can be used between scenes with good effect to illustrate the music.

The operators of both lanterns should fully understand the beginning and end of each scene, and should study carefully the following directions.

Act I. Scene 1. Palace of Ethbaal, King of Tyre. White flood light. Spot on Jezebel when she enters.

Scene 2. Palace of Ahab, King of Israel. White flood light. Flood light off, spot light on Jezebel after exit of Ahab.

Act II. Scene 1. Elijah among mounts of Gilead. Spot light on Elijah.

Scene 2. Palace of Ahab, throne-room. Flood light. Dim flood slightly with frosted glass slide when Elijah appears. Spot on Elijah.

INTERLUDE. During Acts II, Scene 2.

ACT II. 1. Stereopticon-slide of Gorge of Brook Cherith. Hold picture during singing of "Ye People Rend Your Hearts."

2. Stereopticon-slide of "Christ Blessing Little Children" (Plockhörst or Taylor), or "The Hope of the World" (Copping). Hold picture during singing of "If With All Your Hearts."

ACT III. Widow of Zarephath and Elijah. White flood of light. At the close of Act III: Stereopticon-slide of "Beside the Still Waters" (W. L. Taylor). Hold during singing of "Simply Trusting Every Day."

ACT IV. Scene 1. Roadside near Samaria. Obadiah, Elijah, Ahab. Spot light on Obadiah (light brown glass). Flood light (brown) when Elijah appears.

Scene 2. Mt. Carmel. White flood light, until Elijah says to Priests of Baal, "Be Still; the evening draweth nigh," then pink flood light to suggest sunset. Hold pink flood—white spot on Elijah—until end of Elijah's prayer—"that thou hast turned their heart back again." Both lanterns off. 1000-watt bulb over platform turned on for an instant, then platform wholly dark until Reader (behind scenes) finishes words "water that was in the trench." Then white flood light until Priests of Baal, People of Israel, King, and Courtiers have left platform. Pink flood on Elijah and Servant to end of scene.

Scene 3. Palace of Ahab. White flood light.

ACT V. Scene 1. Under the Juniper Tree. White spot on Elijah and Servant as they enter. Leave Servant in dark, light blue spot on Elijah under juniper tree. White flood as Angel enters. Hold until Elijah eats and lies down again. Blue spot until Angel reappears. White flood to end of scene.

Scene 2. On Mt. Horeb. White spot on Elijah until Reader reaches words "And after the earthquake a fire." White spot off, red flood light on. When reader says, "And after the fire, a still, small voice," white flood light, frosted glass slide, until Elijah says, "Thy will, O Lord, be done," then light fades out.

ACT I

Scene 1. A Fatal Alliance

(*Setting: Throne-room of Ethbaal, King of Tyre. Enter* Ethbaal, *alone.*)

Ethbaal (*pacing back and forth*) : Verily, this message from Omri, King of Israel, hath a pleasant sound to me. True, indeed, Israel is but a petty country, and most of its people are but farmers, yet this King Omri hath done some good things. He hath built him a new capital, the city of Samaria, and they do say it is well built and strongly defended.

And even though this Israel is but a weak kingdom, it behooveth all of us to stand together against the aggressions of the hated empire of the Assyrians. Methinks they are looking already with covetous eyes on the prosperity of my fair kingdom. (*Consults paper in his hand.*) "Seal the alliance by the marriage of thy daughter Jezebel to my son Ahab." Ah, my daughter must indeed wed a prince and become some day a queen, but is Israel great enough for her? I will see what the maid herself hath to say about it.

(*Claps hands. Page appears. To page:*)

Summon the Princess Jezebel.

(*Enter* Jezebel.)

Jezebel: What wilt thou, O my father?

Ethbaal (*seating himself on throne, motioning* Jezebel *to seat at his feet*) : My daughter, there is a matter of great importance to be decided—and at once. And since it concerneth thee, I thought to depart from my usual custom and discuss it with thee. Thou knowest, my Jezebel, of the Kingdom of Israel to the south of us? The King of that country, Omri, hath sent a message unto me, desiring an alliance with us. And, moreover, he proposeth that the alliance be sealed by thy union with his son, Prince Ahab. Wouldest thou be Queen of Israel, my daughter?

Jezebel: A queen, yea, my father. But Queen of Israel? I know not. Is not that kingdom but a tiny one, and are not the people worshipers of a strange God they call Jehovah?

Ethbaal: Yea, my daughter: thou hast spoken truly. (*Face lights up with a new thought.*) And therein lieth our opportunity!

Thou knowest, my daughter, how we enlightened people are worshipers of Baal, the Sun-god. And this alliance, and thy new position as Queen of Israel, shall give unto us the chance to win that whole nation to Baal-worship!

JEZEBEL (*clapping her hands*): Verily, my father, Baal hath granted thee wisdom above thy fellows. As thou knowest, I am the Priestess of Baal and devoted to the god. I will go to this uncouth Israelite, Ahab, and bend him to my will and the worship of our Baal.

ETHBAAL: It is well. The arrangements shall be made with haste.

(*Curtain. Organ or piano solo.*)

SCENE 2. A DANGEROUS COMPROMISE

(*Setting: Ivory palace of Ahab in Samaria. Rich hangings, couch, and tabouret. Enter* AHAB *and* JEZEBEL.)

AHAB: Welcome, my Queen, beautiful Jezebel! Thrice welcome to my palace and my kingdom, even as thou hast already found a welcome in my heart.

JEZEBEL (*reclining on couch*): I thank thee, my lord Ahab. Thine ivory palace is indeed beautiful, and this city which thy father Omri hath built is more glorious than I had imagined. The half had not been told me. But, O my lord Ahab (*in a pleading tone, placing hand on* AHAB'S *shoulder*) there is one thing lacking in this thy great city—one thing I miss exceedingly, and without which my life in thine ivory palace cannot be quite happy, even with the blessing of thy love, my lord.

AHAB (*earnestly*): And what is that, fair Queen? My love for thee is so great that I would grant thee thy heart's desire, even to the half of my kingdom.

JEZEBEL (*smiling*): 'Tis much less than half of thy kingdom, my lord Ahab; it is very easy for thee to grant. Give me permission, O my king, to build here in thy city a temple for the god of my homeland, Baal the Sun-god, and allow me to bring certain of the priests of Baal and Astoreth from Tyre for this new temple.

AHAB (*in surprise*) : A temple to Baal! In Israel's capital? But Jehovah is the God of Israel!

JEZEBEL (*pleading*) : Yea, O king, but cannot thy people worship thy Jehovah and the great Sun-god too? And if thou dost love me as thou sayest, thou wouldest surely do this one little thing for me.

AHAB (*aside*) : Well, why not? If the people want to worship two gods, why should they not? Surely it would not be turning away from Jehovah merely to build another temple here. And these affairs of religion matter little, after all.

(*To* JEZEBEL) : Thou shalt have thy wish, my Queen. See thou to it as thou dost desire. Farewell for now. (*Exit* AHAB.)

JEZEBEL (*rising*) : Aha—aha! Already he is in my power—that uncouth Ahab! And I can see the time speedily coming when the great Baal, the god of the Sun, shall be worshiped throughout Israel, even as in my father's kingdom. And I, Jezebel, shall bring this to pass!

(*Curtain.*)

Duet or Quartet, " Yield Not to Temptation " or " In the Hour of Trial, Jesus Plead for Me."

ACT II

SCENE 1. A LONELY MESSENGER

(*Setting: Out-of-doors scene among the hills of Gilead. Enter* ELIJAH ; *paces back and forth.*)

ELIJAH : It is sad news, indeed, that which hath been brought from Samaria! They say that all Israel is forsaking the worship of Jehovah and going over to Baal, that the wicked Jezebel whom King Ahab hath brought from Tyre, hath builded in Samaria a mighty temple to Baal, and that hundreds of priests and prophets of Baal eat at her table.

Woe! Woe! For the devices of the wicked prosper, and the forces of evil triumph. Surely the hand of Jehovah must punish this guilty Ahab and his followers for compromising the worship of Jehovah with this false and evil Baal.

(*Sits down upon a rock, bows head in thought.*)

VOICE OF JEHOVAH (*from behind scenes*) : Go thou unto Ahab and proclaim unto him the word which I shall give thee!

ELIJAH: It is the command of Jehovah! I will go, and Ahab, that troubler of Israel, shall hear the doom that Jehovah pronounceth against Israel for her sin! (*Exit* ELIJAH.)

Organ or orchestra, " Meditation " from " Thais."

SCENE 2. A ROYAL MESSAGE

(*Palace of Ahab; throne-room;* KING AHAB *on throne.* GUARDS, SCRIBE, PAGE. SCRIBE *is reading from official scroll.*)

SCRIBE (*reading to the* KING) : Two important messages have been received, O King. Shall I disclose them unto thee?

KING AHAB: Yea, read thou the records.

SCRIBE (*drawing two scrolls from bag of scrolls hanging over his arm, opens one and reads*) : " Thus saith Benhadad, King of Syria; Behold, I have gathered together all my house, and the thirty and two kings who are subject unto me, and a multitude of horses and chariots, and I will come up against Samaria, and will lay siege to it, and I will destroy it! Listen unto me, O Ahab, King of Israel; thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine."

(AHAB *trembles.* SCRIBE *rolls up scroll, returns it to the bag, opens the other.*)

" Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, unto Ahab, King of Israel: Let there be peace, I pray thee, between thy house and my house. Let my people be as thy people, and my horses as thy horses. If Jehovah will, I will come unto thee on a day not far hence and we will confer together."

(*Reading is interrupted by sudden appearance of* ELIJAH. SCRIBE *looks puzzled for a moment, slowly rolls up scroll and replaces it in bag. Steps aside and stands watching, through rest of scene.* ELIJAH *suddenly appears before* AHAB—*no introduction, no bowing before the* KING; *thrusts guards aside and stands before the* KING *with folded arms. Delivers his message in a tone of sternness.*)

ELIJAH: As Jehovah the God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. (ELIJAH *disappears suddenly.*)

AHAB (*in tone of awe*): This is none other than a prophet of Jehovah! "No dew or rain these years." That meaneth famine for our land—naught else! It is the punishment of Jehovah for the bringing of Baal worship into our land!

(*To* GUARD): Summon quickly Obadiah, the Steward of the Household. (*Exit* GUARD. *Enter* OBADIAH; *salutes the* KING.)

AHAB (*to* OBADIAH): There hath but now appeared before me a man in strange garb—a hairy mantle and a leathern girdle; he stood here before me, and without warning or obeisance spoke unto me this message: "As Jehovah, the God of Israel, liveth before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word."

Obadiah, take unto thee whatsoever men be needed and pursue after this strange man—perchance he may be a prophet of Jehovah—and bring him unto me. Speed thee on thy way, and find him, wherever he may have hidden himself. (*Exit* OBADIAH.)

(*Curtain.*)

Interlude, Trio, "Ye People, Rend Your Hearts."

Tenor Solo, "If With All Your Hearts Ye Truly Seek Me"—*Oratorio of "Elijah."*

ACT III. JEHOVAH'S CARE

(*Home of* WIDOW *of Zarephath. Front of Oriental home at rear of platform on right side.*)

WIDOW (*to herself, as she gathers small sticks, making a bundle of them*): Alas, alas, this famine is sore upon the land. I have heard that it extendeth throughout our neighboring land of Israel, and that it is spreading even unto Sidon. Woe is me! Verily our god Baal is a cruel god!

(*Enter* ELIJAH, *wearily.*)

ELIJAH (*to* WIDOW): Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel that I may drink it. (WIDOW *starts to go for water.*) Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

(ELIJAH *leans upon staff as though weary from long journey.*)

WIDOW (*bowing before* ELIJAH) : As Jehovah thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but only a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruse; and behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die.

ELIJAH (*glancing upward, as though listening. To* WIDOW, *with new animation and cheer*) : Fear not; go and do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it forth unto me, and afterward make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, " The jar of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that Jehovah sendeth rain upon the earth." This is the word of my God Jehovah. And his words shall never fail. Nay, his word is true even in Sidon as in Israel.

(*Curtain.*)

Quartet or Choir, " Simply Trusting Every Day."

ACT IV

SCENE 1. THE COMMAND OF JEHOVAH

(*Setting: By a roadside near Samaria. Enter* OBADIAH, *alone, peering about with care, shading eyes with hand as though searching.*)

OBADIAH: Verily, there is no sign of greenness anywhere. Three years and six months it is since that dread messenger of Jehovah, Elijah the Prophet, appeared before the king and uttered that prophecy of " no dew nor rain these years." The king, like myself, is searching the land over for a bit of green pasturage for the royal beasts. Long have I searched and with utmost care, but everywhere is naught but brown and barren lands. Verily, Jehovah hath sorely punished the land for the worship of Baal.

(*Enter* ELIJAH *suddenly, confronts* OBADIAH, *who lifts his hands in surprise, and falls upon his face before* ELIJAH.)

OBADIAH (*rising and bowing before* ELIJAH, *in a tone of great surprise*) : Is it thou, my lord Elijah?

ELIJAH: It is I: go tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.

OBADIAH: Wherein have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me? As Jehovah thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee; and when they said, "He is not here," he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not. And now thou sayest, "Go, tell thy lord, 'Behold, Elijah is here.'" And it will come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of Jehovah will carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he will slay me; but I thy servant fear Jehovah from my youth. Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of Jehovah, how I hid a hundred of Jehovah's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? And now thou sayest, "Go tell thy Lord, 'Behold, Elijah is here.'" And he will slay me.

ELIJAH: As Jehovah of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto him today.

(*Exit* OBADIAH. ELIJAH *paces to and fro, waiting for* AHAB. *Enter* AHAB *alone.*)

AHAB (*angrily*): Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel?

ELIJAH: I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of Jehovah, and thou hast followed the Baalim. Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of Asherah four hundred, that eat at Jezebel's table.

AHAB (*cowering before* ELIJAH): It shall be as thou hast commanded.

(*Curtain.*)

SCENE 2. TOTTERING KNEES

(*On Mt. Carmel. Background of curtains; platforms arranged as series of steps in semicircle, rear. Enter from left* PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, *in groups, talking excitedly together. Arrange themselves on series of steps at left. Enter from right* PRIESTS *and* PROPHETS OF BAAL, *silent, perplexed, sad; group themselves, standing, on steps at right. Enter* KING AHAB *and courtiers, silent, group themselves at center, rear. When all are in place,* ELIJAH *enters, right;*

ignores PRIESTS OF BAAL *and* KING; *goes to center, partly facing* PEOPLE OF ISRAEL; *appeals to them.*)

ELIJAH: How long do ye totter between two opinions? If Jehovah be God, follow him, but if Baal, follow him.

(PEOPLE *look apprehensively at one another but make no reply.*)

I, even I only, am left a prophet of Jehovah; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under. And call ye on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of Jehovah; and the god that answereth by fire, let him be God.

PEOPLE (*nodding approvingly*): It is well spoken, for is not Baal the Sun-god? Surely at such a time as this the Sun-god would answer such a test. (*Seat themselves to watch the test.*)

ELIJAH (*approaching* PRIESTS OF BAAL): Choose you one bullock for yourselves and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under.

PRIESTS OF BAAL (*bring in altar; move in procession about altar, chanting*):

O Baal, hear us! O Baal, answer us!
Send down fire, O mighty Sun-god!
O Baal, hear us! O Baal, answer us!
Send down fire, O mighty Sun-god!

(*Circle altar four times.* ELIJAH *interrupts.*)

ELIJAH (*with sarcasm*): Cry aloud; for he is a god; either he is musing, or he is gone aside, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked!

(PRIESTS OF BAAL *resume circling of altar and chant, faster and faster and with less regularity. Pretend to cut themselves with long knives. Some fall on the floor exhausted.*)

ELIJAH (*to* PRIESTS OF BAAL): Be still. The evening draweth nigh. Thy test is over, and thy god hath not answered. (*To* PEOPLE.) Come near unto me.

(PEOPLE *gather at front of platform, left.* KING *and* COURTIERS *move forward also.* PRIESTS OF BAAL *retire to background, right.* ELIJAH *gathers up twelve large stones which have been scattered around foreground. Builds altar.*)

ELIJAH (*to* KING *and* PEOPLE) : Fill two jars with water and pour it on the burnt-offering and on the wood.

(*Four of the people bring water.*)

Do it the second time.

(*Jars filled and emptied again.* ELIJAH *stands behind altar and raises both arms in prayer:*)

O Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Jehovah, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Jehovah, art God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

READER (*behind scenes*) : Then the fire of Jehovah fell and consumed the sacrifice and the wood and the altar, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

(*Very strong electric light is turned on in background for an instant, flooding the whole platform with dazzling light to suggest flash of lightning. Then all lights are turned off for an instant, leaving platform entirely dark. During the instant of darkness the altar is removed, or covered over with a dark cloth to suggest that it has been consumed by the fire of Jehovah.*)

PEOPLE AND KING'S COURTIERS (*falling on their faces*) : Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God!

(PROPHETS OF BAAL *attempt to slink away quietly.*)

ELIJAH (*suddenly turning toward* PROPHETS OF BAAL, *sternly*) : Take the Prophets of Baal! Let not one of them escape.

(PEOPLE *rush upon* PROPHETS OF BAAL, *seize them and lead them out.* KING *and* COURTIERS *follow, leaving* ELIJAH *and* SERVANT *alone.*)

ELIJAH (*to* SERVANT) : Go up now, look toward the sea.

(*Bows in prayer, on knees, with head bent low toward knees.* SERVANT *climbs steps at right; shades eyes with hand; looks intently. Returns to* ELIJAH, *who lifts his head for reply.*)

SERVANT: There is nothing.

ELIJAH: Go again, and yet again.

(ELIJAH *bows in prayer and continues in same posture while* SERVANT *goes and looks three more times. At the fourth time,* SERVANT *does not return, but calls from height.*)

SERVANT (*joyously*): Behold, there ariseth a cloud out of the sea, as small as a man's hand.

ELIJAH (*rising*): Blessed be Jehovah, whose mighty power hath gotten him the victory. Go up, say unto Ahab, make ready thy chariot and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.

(*Exit* ELIJAH *and* SERVANT.)

Organ or Orchestra, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."

SCENE 3. A THREAT OF EVIL

(AHAB'S *palace. Enter* JEZEBEL.)

JEZEBEL: What hath happened today on yonder Carmel? Lo, the sky groweth dark. The clouds are swallowing up Baal, the Sun-god. Woe, woe! Hath that rude prophet of Gilead triumphed over my splendid prophets? Perish the thought! Away with him!

(*Enter* AHAB, *panting, as though from great haste and much exertion.*)

JEZEBEL: What hath happened, my lord? Tell me quickly.

AHAB: The Prophet Elijah hath triumphed over thy prophets. Jehovah hath answered the test of fire, and the people all bowed before him, crying out, "Jehovah, he is God." Nay, more, my Jezebel, at Elijah's word, they seized all thy prophets and slew them. They let not one escape.

JEZEBEL (*in horrified whisper*): They slew them all?

AHAB: Yes, every one. And look! Elijah's God hath not only answered by fire; he is answering the great cry of the people, and he is sending rain.

JEZEBEL (*stamping her foot, clenching her fists in anger*): And thou didst let Elijah do this! Thou coward!

(*Clapping her hands, to* SERVANT *who appears*): Go, find this vile prophet Elijah, and say unto him, "Thus saith Jezebel the

Queen: 'So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.'"

(*Curtain.*)

ACT V. ELIJAH'S VISION

SCENE 1. UNDER THE JUNIPER TREE

(*Setting: Dark curtain background. Single small tree or shrub at right near front. Enter* ELIJAH, *weary, walking with difficulty, followed by his* SERVANT.)

ELIJAH (*to* SERVANT): Tarry thou here, while I go on alone into the wilderness.

(*Crosses platform, throws himself down under juniper tree.*)

ELIJAH (*with deepest despondency*): It is enough: I have tried and failed! The people acknowledged God; the prophets of Baal are slain—but (*trembles violently*) Jezebel still liveth—and she is queen! Now, O Jehovah, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers!

(*Lies down on ground, draws mantle over head and goes to sleep. Enter young woman in white, with flowing hair, gown loosely belted with white cord girdle. Brings cruse of water and round flat cake of bread, large round crackers will do. Places them near* ELIJAH; *touches him on shoulder.*)

ANGEL: Arise and eat. (*Exit* ANGEL.)

(ELIJAH *starts with surprise; looks around, sees no one; finally sees bread and water. Eats, drinks, and lies down to sleep again.* ANGEL *reenters with another cake and cruse; places them as before; touches* ELIJAH.)

ANGEL: Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee. (*Exit* ANGEL.)

(ELIJAH *rises, eats, picks up staff, and starts away.*)

(*Curtain.*)

Music: Alto Solo, "Oh Rest in the Lord."—*Oratorio "Elijah."*

SCENE 2. ON MT. HOREB

(*Setting should suggest a cave.* ELIJAH *seated at entrance. Dark curtains for background.*)

VOICE OF JEHOVAH (*from behind scenes*): What doest thou here, Elijah?

ELIJAH (*in resentful tone*): I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword: and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

VOICE OF JEHOVAH: Go forth and stand upon the mount before Jehovah.

(ELIJAH *rises, goes to front of platform at right, and stands leaning on his staff, waiting.*)

WHIRLWIND. (*The "great and strong wind" may be suggested by several large electric fans placed just at the edge of the platform behind the scenes, so directed as to sweep the platform with a strong current of air. Or, if pipe-organ is available, "wind" and "earthquake" may be suggested by appropriate organ music. Or a reader, behind scenes, may recite, "And behold, Jehovah passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before Jehovah."*)

ELIJAH: Behold the mighty power of the wind. It even breaketh in pieces these mighty rocks. O Jehovah of hosts, art thou in the whirlwind?

(ELIJAH *listens for an answer, but there is only a deathlike stillness.* ELIJAH *shudders.*)

EARTHQUAKE. (*This may be suggested by organ music, as above, or the canvas or rug covering the platform may be pulled violently, first from one side, then from the other, by men behind the scenes,* ELIJAH *keeping his place with difficulty. Or a reader, behind scenes, may recite, "And after the wind an earthquake."*)

ELIJAH (*covering his face with his hands in terror*): Surely the might of Jehovah is revealed in the terrors of the earthquake! Even the solid mountain beneath my feet rocks and trembles. O Jehovah of hosts, art thou in the earthquake?

(*Listens for answer, but there is only deathlike stillness.*)

FIRE. (*This may be suggested, if the drama is given out-of-doors, by red fire just off the stage. Or, if given in a church, it may be suggested by red electric lights turned on and off several times. Or a reader, behind the scenes, may recite, "And after the earthquake, a fire."*)

ELIJAH: The majesty of fire! How it sweeps over the peaks! There is power—it must be the power of Jehovah! O Jehovah of hosts, art thou in the fire?

(*Listens for answer, but only deathlike stillness follows.*)

ELIJAH (*perplexed*): Surely I heard a Voice, and it told me to go forth and stand upon the mount before Jehovah. And I am here; great marvels have I seen, but Jehovah hath not yet spoken unto me.

STILL, SMALL VOICE (*Solo*):

Dear Lord and Father of Mankind;
Breathe through the heats of our desire
Thy coolness and thy balm;
Let self be dumb, let sense retire,
Breathe through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
Thy still, small voice of calm!

(*Or a reader, "And after the fire, a still, small voice."*)

(ELIJAH *listens eagerly; bows his head, removes his sandals, stands in reverent attitude.*)

VOICE (*quiet but clear*): What doest thou here, Elijah?

ELIJAH (*humbly, with head still bowed*): I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

VOICE OF JEHOVAH (*behind scenes*): Thou alone, left true to Jehovah? Nay, Elijah, seven thousand I have in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him. Tarry not here, Elijah, in the lonely wilderness in sadness and discouragement. Go, return on thy way to Damascus. There shalt thou anoint Hazael to be king over Syria;

then shalt thou anoint Jehu, the son of Nimshi, to be king over Israel. Yea, Elijah, thou shalt also anoint Elisha, the son of Shaphat, to be prophet in thy room.

ELIJAH (*lifting his head with new expression of courage and hope*) : I thank thee, O Jehovah, that thou hast revealed unto me thy controlling power in the affairs of men as well as nature. I thank thee that thou has shown me that thy power never faileth, and that thou dost ever lead thy people on to victory. I will obey thy word, and the kings of the earth shall know that thou art God, and that there is none other beside thee. Forgive my foolish discouragement, and help me wisely to train Elisha, the son of Shaphat, that he may carry on my work after me, and lead thy people ever closer unto thyself.

CHOIR (*as light fades out, softly*) :

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to thee.
Take my heart and make it thine,
It shall be no longer mine.

Take my hands and let them move,
At the impulse of thy love;
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my voice and let me sing,
Always, only for my King.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for thee.

Prayer and Benediction.

3. ISAIAH THE STATESMAN

JERUSALEM, CIRCA 740-701 B. C.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I. Scene 1. In the throne-room of King Uzziah's palace. Uzziah alone.

Scene 2. The Temple of Jehovah, Court of the Priests. Uzziah, Attendant, Azariah, and Priests.

ACT II. Scene 1. The Temple of Jehovah, Court of the People. Isaiah, Angel, Voice of the Lord.

ACT III. Scene 1. Public square of the city. Isaiah and Crowd.

Scene 2. Conduit of the Upper Pool, in the Highway of the King's Field. Ahaz, Attendant, Isaiah, and Shear-jashub.

ACT IV. Scene 1. Public square of the city. Isaiah and Twelve Disciples. Crowd of Bystanders.

ACT V. Scene 1. Public square of the city, near the Great Gate. Bystanders, Fugitives, Isaiah.

Scene 2. Eliakim, Shebna, Joah, the Rabshakeh.

Scene 3. Throne-room of King Hezekiah's palace. Hezekiah, Eliakim, Shebna, Joah, Isaiah.

Scene 4. Public square of the City, near Great Gate. Messenger, Isaiah, Hezekiah, Eliakim, Shebna, Joah, People.

CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance.)

Uzziah, King of Jerusalem and Judah. Cape, blue or red, over blue and white costume.

Azariah, High Priest. White under blue cape; short breastplate, gold fringe; turban, white and blue.

Ten Subordinate Priests. Number may be changed if necessary. Ordinary costumes. White turbans.

Isaiah, the Statesman-Prophet. Yellow and white, with mantle.

Angel. White flowing gown, no scarf; white silk ribbon around hair.

Crowd of Citizens of Jerusalem. Number may vary. Both men and women, and a few children.

Two Speakers from Crowd.

King Ahaz. Blue and white undergarment; red overgarment; red turban.

Attendant.

Isaiah's Son, Shear-jashub.

Disciples of Isaiah. Twelve is suggested as number, though this may be varied.

Two Speakers.

Four Bystanders and Fugitives. Number of Fugitives may vary.

Eliakim, the Steward, Shebna the Scribe, and Joah the Recorder.

The Rabshakeh, Chief of Staff of the King of Assyria.

King Hezekiah.

Messenger.

Suggestions as to Scenery and Properties

Act I. Scene 1. *Throne-room of palace.* Walls of room may be made by hanging Oriental rugs around three sides of platform. Throne on raised platform covered with Oriental couch cover. A few palms in the background will complete the setting.

Scene 2. *Temple of Jehovah.* Portion of Altar of Burnt Offering at extreme right. Curtain looped back at center of platform in rear, show suggestion of Holy Place, with Table of Showbread on right. Golden Candlesticks on left, and Golden Altar in center in front of curtain suggesting the Veil. Dim lights within.

Act II. Same as last scene, except that Altar of Burnt Offering is in center, and curtains of Holy Place are drawn a little more closely.

Act III. Scene 1. *Public square of city.* Suggestion of houses on sides and rear. Fronts of Oriental houses can easily be made by tacking gray building paper on wooden frames, and lining with marking ink to represent stones.

Scene 2. *Conduit of the Upper Pool.* Curtain or screen at rear. Suggestion of conduit may be made of stones—gray building paper tacked over small wooden boxes—leading into "pool"—enlargement of circle of stones.

ACT IV. Same as Act III, Scene 1. Isaiah should have large roll. Some of his disciples might have smaller rolls.

ACT V. Scene 1. Same as above, with addition of Gateway and Gate. These may be built in same manner as the houses.

Scene 2. *Wall of city.* Gate closed. Actors stand on chairs or tables behind wall, so that heads and shoulders show above wall. Parapet over gate should be about one-third higher than rest of wall.

Scene 3. Same as Act I, Scene 1.

Scene 4. Same as Scene 2, with gate wide open.

ACT I

SCENE 1

(*In the throne-room of the* KING'S *palace.*)

KING UZZIAH: Behold, how great things I have done! Lo, there hath been no king like unto me in all of the days since Solomon and David! For have I not warred against the Philistines, and broken down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Ashdod? And have I not built cities in the country of Ashdod, and among the Philistines? And have I not defeated the Arabians that dwelt in Gurbaal, and the Meunim? And do not the Ammonites pay tribute unto me?

Moreover, have I not built towers in the wilderness, and hewed out many cisterns, for I have much cattle; in the lowland also, and in the plain: and have I not husbandmen and vine-dressers in the mountains and in the fruitful fields? For I love husbandry.

Yea, and behold how mighty an army I have gathered and trained and equipped! An army that goeth out to war by bands, according to the number of their reckoning made by Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the officer, under the hand of Hananiah, one of my captains. The whole number of the heads of fathers' houses, even the mighty men of valor, is two thousand and six hundred. And have I not prepared for them, even for all this host, shields, and spears, and helmets, and coats of mail, and bows, and stones for slinging? And what king before me ever made such engines of war for the towers and the battlements!

Lo, the nation is prosperous, and the fame of Judah and the power of Jerusalem hath gone forth into many lands.

I, even I, have done all this great work!

SCENE 2

Characters: Ten Priests, clothed in white; High Priest, blue robe over white clothes; King Uzziah with attendant.

(PRIESTS *crossing Court as if on regular duties.* HIGH PRIEST *standing near entrance of Holy Place. Enter* KING UZZIAH *with attendant.*)

UZZIAH: Behold now, ye priests!

(PRIESTS *bow low before the* KING. HIGH PRIEST *alone standing erect, with folded arms.*)

UZZIAH: Hear me now, ye priests: am I not, even I, the great King over Judah and over Jerusalem, and hath not my strong arm gotten me many mighty victories, and hath not my cunning devised many wonderful works? Why should I, the mighty King whose hand hath wrought such wonders, be made to stand in the outer court with the common herd, whilst ye priests offer incense upon the golden altar in token of prayers unto Jehovah? Behold I, even I, will offer incense for myself! No longer will I stand and wait while Azariah, the High Priest, yonder, entereth into the Holy Place in my stead. I will enter in for myself, and for myself and for my people I will offer incense.

(UZZIAH *starts as though to enter the Holy Place.* AZARIAH, *the High Priest, steps forward to center of the entrance and stands there with folded arms to block the King's entrance. The other priests move forward across the doorway.*)

UZZIAH: Away, ye priests! Away, Azariah! Didst thou not hear me? I, the King, have spoken! And my word is law! Thinkest thou to stop me from entering this Holy Place in Jehovah's Temple? Dost thou not know that I am King, and that beside me there is none else? Away, I say!

AZARIAH (*in quiet tone*): It is true, O Uzziah, even as thou hast said, that thou art King in Judah and in Jerusalem. And it is even true that thou art a great king, even like unto King Solomon, whose mighty hand builded this beautiful Temple. And there are many things which thou canst do. But one thing thou mayest not do, even though thou art king—thou mayest not take the place of the priest of Jehovah! Thou mayest not enter into this Holy

Place to burn incense upon the Golden Altar unto Jehovah, for this pertaineth not to thee, Uzziah, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go thou out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed.

UZZIAH (*very angry*): What meanest thou, Azariah? How darest thou speak thus unto thy King? Knowest thou not that I have power over thy life, even to take it away from thee? And dost thou dare tell *me*, thy King, that I have trespassed? Away with thee! I will go in, thou shalt not stop me.

(*Steps forward and seizes* AZARIAH *by the arm; attempts to pull him away from Temple entrance. Other priests attempt to force* UZZIAH *back.*)

AZARIAH (*lifting hands in horror*): Behold! The King's forehead!

(*All stand still and gaze at* KING'S *forehead.*)

Behold! The punishment of Jehovah! Uzziah, thou art a leper!

(UZZIAH *turns toward audience, revealing a large white spot in center of forehead.*)

Haste thee to depart from the presence of Jehovah. He hath visited his wrath upon thee for thy presumption. Haste thee! Away!

(UZZIAH *covers his face with his mantle and hurries out.*)

Music, organ, " Chanson Triste," Tschaikowsky.

ACT II

(*In the Temple Court.*)

ISAIAH: Alas! Alas! My heart is sad, and my soul is bowed down with bitterness. Lo, these many years hath the great King Uzziah been the champion of this people, and many and wonderful have been the things which he hath accomplished. The borders of our land hath he extended; he hath made the nations round about to bow down before us. For he was marvelously helped by Jehovah until he became strong.

But alas! alas! In the height of his strength he became proud and claimed all the glory of his mighty achievements for himself, and Jehovah hath punished him, punished him most terribly; for Uzziah hath died a leper.

Behold, if one cannot trust so great a man as Uzziah, in whom can one have confidence? My soul is exceeding bitter.

(*Bows head in hands and sinks down upon floor in dejection. Dazzling light is turned on, flooding whole platform with radiance.* ISAIAH *starts up, surprised; looks upward.*)

ISAIAH: Lo, what is this—this marvelous light I see? The Temple courts have faded from my view. Behold, I see the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filleth the Temple.

QUARTET (*hidden behind scenes, sings to tune Nicæa*):

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
Which wert and art and evermore shalt be.

ISAIAH: Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.

(YOUNG LADY *dressed in white, with flowing hair, approaches* ISAIAH, *bearing lighted torch, electric flashlight, with which she touches* ISAIAH'S *lips.*)

ANGEL: Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven.

VOICE OF THE LORD (*speaker hidden*): Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?

ISAIAH: Here am I; send me.

VOICE OF THE LORD: Go, and tell this people, "Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

"Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again, and be healed."

ISAIAH: Lord, how long?

VOICE OF THE LORD: Until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land become utterly waste, and Jehovah have removed men far away, and the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land. And if there be yet a tenth in it, it

also shall in turn be eaten up: as a terebinth, and as an oak whose stock remaineth, when they are felled; so the holy seed is the stock thereof.

ISAIAH: It is the Lord! He hath chosen and appointed me to proclaim his message to this people. But they will not hear me; I am but a youth. He will make the way plain; he will instruct me in that which I shall speak. It is his message and his work. Let him use me as he will.

Music, organ and violin, "My Jesus as Thou Wilt."

ACT III. THE PROPHET'S WARNINGS

SCENE 1. WARNING TO THE PEOPLE

(*In public square.* ISAIAH *standing before crowd of people. As he begins to speak, crowd becomes silent; many seat themselves.*)

ISAIAH: Let me sing for my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard.

My well-beloved had a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he digged it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also hewed out a wine-press therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?

VOICE FROM CROWD: Surely thy vineyard is altogether evil. Nothing more couldst thou have done than thou didst. If thy vineyard bringeth forth naught but wild grapes, then destroy thou thy vineyard. Take away the hedge and let in the wild beasts. Bestow thou no more labor on such a worthless vineyard.

ISAIAH: And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: and I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor hoed; but there shall

come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. (*Pause.*)

For the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for justice, but, behold, oppression; for righteousness, but, behold, a cry.

ANOTHER VOICE FROM CROWD: What meanest thou, O seer? Why sayest thou harsh things against thine own land and the city of thine own people? These words are hard words; the land is not able to bear them.

ISAIAH: Listen, my people: these are the woes which Jehovah pronounceth against Judah and the people of Jerusalem:

"Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no room, and ye be made to dwell alone in the midst of the land! Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair, without inhabitant. For ten acres of vineyard shall yield but one bath, and a homer of seed shall yield but an ephah.

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

"Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

"Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink; that justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

"Therefore, as the tongue of fire devoureth the stubble, and as the dry grass sinketh down in the flame, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust; because they have rejected the law of Jehovah of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel."

(PROPHET *leaves scene, more in sorrow than in anger.* PEOPLE *remain, talking excitedly, gesticulating, and arguing about* PROPHET'*s message.*)

(*Curtain.*)

SCENE 2. WARNING TO KING AHAZ

(*Scene: suggestion of aqueduct and pool of water. Enter* KING AHAZ *with* ATTENDANT. KING *carefully inspects aqueduct and pool.*)

KING AHAZ (*to* ATTENDANT) : Thinkest thou that this conduit can bring enough water to the pool, that the city may live, if our enemies surround the city and lay siege to it?

ATTENDANT: I cannot tell, O King; it seemeth but a tiny stream to supply the wants of this thy great city. But art thou certain that Rezin, King of Syria, and Pekah, King of Israel, have formed an alliance against thee?

KING AHAZ (*sadly*) : Yea, it is even so; my messengers have brought me tidings of the advance of their armies. Verily, my heart trembleth with fear. But look! Who is that coming yonder?

ATTENDANT (*shading his eyes*) : It is the Seer, O King, and he bringeth with him his little son. Verily the Prophet hath chosen a strange name for his offspring. I have been told that he calls him "Shear-Jashub." It is said in the city that the Prophet meaneth by thus giving to his child so strange a name—"A remnant shall return"—to teach that only a remnant of thy people, O King, shall be left in thy land.

(*Enter* ISAIAH.)

ISAIAH: O King, art thou fearful, and art thou disquieted because of this alliance of Rezin and Pekah against thee? Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither let thy heart be faint, because of these two tails of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and the son of Remaliah. Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have purposed evil against thee, saying, "Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set up a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeel," thus saith the Lord Jehovah:

"It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken in pieces, so that it shall not be a people: and the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established."

(AHAZ *remains silent, head bowed in thought.*)

ISAIAH: Does thou not believe my word, O King? Ask then a sign of Jehovah thy God. Ask it either in the depth or in the height above.

AHAZ: I will not ask, neither will I tempt Jehovah.

ISAIAH: Hear ye now, O house of David:

Is it a small thing for you to weary men, that ye will weary God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, till he knoweth to refuse evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse evil, and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken. Jehovah will bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—even the king of Assyria.

(ISAIAH *leaves* AHAZ.)

AHAZ: I would that this Prophet had not come unto me. Can I protect my land from these kings who would invade it by signs from heaven? Nay, I know that which I will do. I will make an alliance with the great King of Assyria. He will save me from these mine enemies. His armies are mighty, and when he speaks he speaketh with power. Go thou, my servant, and call the scribe, that I may speedily send a message unto the great King, praying him to come to my aid in this time of my extremity.

(*Curtain.*)

ACT IV

SOME YEARS LATER

ISAIAH AND HIS DISCIPLES

(*Scene: a corner of a public square in Jerusalem.* TWELVE DISCIPLES, *some men, some women, seated around* ISAIAH. PEOPLE *of the city, passing by, stop now and then for a moment or two, out of curiosity.*)

FIRST DISCIPLE (*to* ISAIAH): What thinkest thou, Teacher, about this talk of an alliance with Egypt against Assyria? Hast thou heard that even now the ambassadors from Egypt are drawing near the city gates, and that they come with gifts and promises from the ruler of Egypt? Verily, this Assyria is an hard taskmaster, and her yoke is hard to bear. Would that Ahaz had never made that alliance with Assyria to protect himself against the forces of Syria and Israel!

ISAIAH: Take ye warning, my children, from Samaria. Woe to the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim and to the fading flower of his glorious beauty. Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and a strong one; as a tempest of hail, a destroying storm, as a tempest of mighty waters overflowing, will he cast down to the earth with the hand. The crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden under foot: and the fading flower of his glorious beauty shall be as the first ripe fig before the summer; which, when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

BYSTANDER (*to another, mockingly*): Whom will he teach knowledge? and whom will he make to understand the message? He talks as if for babes, them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts. For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little!

ISAIAH (*sternly*): Yea, through a stammering speech and a strange tongue Jehovah will speak to this people; to whom he said, "This is the rest, rest to him that is weary, and this the refreshing"; yet they would not hear. Therefore shall the word of Jehovah be unto them "precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little," so that they may go and fall backward and be broken and snared and taken.

Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses and trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but who look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek Jehovah. Now the Egyptians are men, and not God, and their horses are flesh, and not spirit: and when Jehovah shall stretch forth his hand, both he that helpeth shall stumble, and he that is helped shall fall, and they all shall be consumed together.

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Jehovah hath spoken:

"I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

"Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that deal corruptly! they have forsaken Jehovah,

they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are estranged and gone backward.

"What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?" saith Jehovah: "I have had enough of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or of he-goats. Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; new moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies—I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together," saith Jehovah; "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

SECOND DISCIPLE: What meanest thou, Teacher? Will the Assyrian in very truth come up against our land, even as he hath against Samaria? Is there no deliverance for us?

ISAIAH: Yea, the Assyrian will come, I behold him even now upon his way.

But fear thou not, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian, though he smite thee with the rod and lift up his staff against thee. Behold, the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, will lop the boughs with terror, and the high stature shall be hewn down, and the lofty shall be brought low. And there shall come forth a shoot out of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of Jehovah. And his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah. With righteousness shall he judge the poor. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist and faithfulness the girdle of his loins. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.

Behold, a king shall reign in justice. And a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as streams of water in a dry place, as the shade of a great rock in a weary land.

(*Curtain.*)

Music, quartet, "Though Your Sins Be as Scarlet," Crosby.

ACT V

SCENE 1

(*Jerusalem: square near the Great Gate of the city.* FUGITIVES *from captured cities of Judah crowding in through the gate, loaded down with bundles of their possessions on their backs. Noise, tumult, and confusion. The engineers laboring on the defenses of the walls. Men and women running to and fro.*)

BYSTANDER (*to group of* FUGITIVES) : Whence come ye, and what news do ye bring?

FUGITIVE: From Timnah are we come, and we alone are escaped of all in our city. Alas! alas! Woe unto us! the Assyrian is mighty, and his hosts are terrible. The elders of our city hath he slain with the sword, and all our homes hath he burned with fire. Woe, woe, unto us!

BYSTANDER (*anxiously*) : Thinkest thou that he will yet march upon Jerusalem? Will his armies lay siege to the Holy City?

FUGITIVE (*with conviction*) : Yea, and speedily! If thou and we are to find deliverance from the terror of his hosts, the walls of Jerusalem must be made strong and the gates doubly barred.

SECOND BYSTANDER: But what availeth all this feverish preparation? If, as thou sayest, the Assyrian is so mighty and his armies so terrible, surely our walls will be but little protection against his engines of war. Nay, it availeth us naught to labor and to toil and to fight. Come, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die.

(*Enter* ISAIAH, *just in time to hear the last words of* SECOND BYSTANDER.)

ISAIAH (*sternly*) : What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the housetops? For it is a day of discomfiture and of treading down and of perplexity. Thou didst look to the armor of the House of the Forest. And ye saw the breaches of the City of David, that they were many (*gesture toward the walls*), and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool: and ye numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and ye brake down the houses to fortify the wall; ye also made a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the old pool. But ye looked not unto Him that had done this, neither had ye respect unto Him that purposed it long ago.

And in that day did the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts, call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth; and behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine: saying, Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die! And Jehovah of hosts revealed himself in mine ears, "Surely this iniquity shall not be forgiven you till ye die," saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts.

(*Exit* ISAIAH.)

THIRD BYSTANDER: A strange old man indeed! He prophesieth punishment and destruction, yet hath he not said, even he, that Jerusalem shall not be taken: that our city shall be saved?

SECOND BYSTANDER: Strange words indeed! Yet thou wilt do well to heed them, for the old prophet seemeth in very truth to know the things whereof he speaks. And methinks perchance if we looked to Jehovah and trusted in him to deliver us, that we might be saved.

(*Curtain.*)

SCENE 2

(*The walls of Jerusalem; the parapet over the Great Gate. The Commissioners of King Hezekiah,* ELIAKIM *the Steward,* SHEBNA *the Scribe, and* JOAH *the Recorder, upon the wall over the gate. The walls on either side crowded with people.*)

(*Enter, in open space before the wall,* THE RABSHAKEH, *the Chief of Staff of the Assyrian King, attended by a band of Assyrian soldiers.*)

THE RABSHAKEH: Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the King of Assyria:

"What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? I say, thy counsel and strength for the war are but vain words: now on whom dost thou trust, that thou hast rebelled against me? Behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it: so is Pharaoh, King of Egypt, to all that trust on him. But if thou say unto me, 'We trust in Jehovah our God,' is not that he whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and to Jerusalem, 'Ye shall worship before this altar'?"

Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my master, the King of Assyria.

ELIAKIM: Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it; and speak not unto us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that are on the wall.

THE RABSHAKEH: Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? Hath he not sent me to the men that sit upon the wall?

(*In a loud, insolent, defiant tone*): Hear ye the words of the great king, the King of Assyria. Thus saith the King:

"Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he will not be able to deliver you: neither let Hezekiah make you to trust in Jehovah, saying, 'Jehovah will surely deliver us: this city shall not be given into the hand of the King of Assyria.'" Hearken not to Hezekiah; for thus saith the King of Assyria:

"Make your peace with me, and come out to me; and eat every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern; until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards. Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, 'Jehovah will deliver us.' Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the King of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where the gods of Sepharvaim? And have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who are they among all the gods of these countries, that have delivered their country out of my hand, that Jehovah should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?"

(*Exit* RABSHAKEH, *attended by soldiers. Curtain.*)

SCENE 3

(*Palace of* KING HEZEKIAH. *Enter* ELIAKIM, SHEBNA, *and* JOAH, *with garments torn and every indication of sorrow.*)

ELIAKIM: Thus and thus, O King, hath the insolent messenger of the King of Assyria said unto us. He hath defied thee and thy God.

HEZEKIAH (*rending his garments, in token of sorrow*): Alas, alas, woe is me! This is a day of trouble and rebuke. I will go

unto the House of Jehovah and will spread out before him the defiance wherewith the messenger of Assyria hath defied the living God.

But go thou, Eliakim, and thou, Shebna, unto the Prophet Isaiah, and take with thee the elders of the priests, and cover thee with sackcloth. And thus shalt thou speak unto the Prophet:

Thus saith Hezekiah: "This is a day of trouble and rebuke and contumely, for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth. It may be Jehovah thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh whom the King of Assyria his master hath sent to defy the living God; and will rebuke the words which Jehovah thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left."

(*Exit* ELIAKIM, SHEBNA, *and* JOAH, *right. Exit* HEZEKIAH, *center rear. Soft music during pause, suggesting prayer. Enter* HEZEKIAH, *taking seat upon the throne. Enter* ELIAKIM *and* SHEBNA, *clothed in sackcloth.*)

ELIAKIM: O King, thus saith Isaiah the Prophet:

"Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith Jehovah: 'Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the King of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will put a spirit in him, and he shall hear tidings, and shall return unto his own land: and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land."

But behold, yonder cometh Isaiah himself. Perchance he hath another message from Jehovah for thee.

(*Enter* ISAIAH.)

KING HEZEKIAH: Thou art welcome indeed, O thou Prophet of Jehovah; Eliakim hath but now brought unto me thy message from Jehovah. Hast thou still another word from thy God for us in this hour of our distress?

ISAIAH: Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel:

"Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib, King of Assyria, this is the word which Jehovah hath spoken concerning him:

"The virgin daughter of Zion despised thee and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. When hast thou defied and blasphemed? And against whom hast thou exalted thy voice and lifted up thine eyes on high?

" Even against the Holy One of Israel!

" I know thy raging against me. Because of thy raging against me, and because thine arrogancy is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

" Therefore thus saith Jehovah concerning the King of Assyria:

" He shall not come unto this city, nor shoot an arrow there, neither shall he come before it with shield, nor cast up a mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and he shall not come unto this city, saith Jehovah. For I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake and for my servant David's sake."

(*Curtain.*)

SCENE 4

(*Jerusalem, early the following morning. Square before the Great Gate. Gate is standing wide open.* PEOPLE *standing about in surprise and amazement.*)

MESSENGER (*hurrying into city*) : Joy! Joy! Joy! Shout aloud the glad tidings! The Assyrian hath perished, his army is destroyed! The hand of Jehovah hath done this! Jehovah hath sent his angel in the night, and hath smitten the camp of our enemies, and they are all dead bodies!

PEOPLE (*in mighty shout of praise*) : Hallelujah! Jehovah of hosts hath done this! His hand is mighty and his arm hath been stretched out to save.

(*Enter* ISAIAH. PEOPLE *do him honor as he walks to the front of the gate.*

Enter HEZEKIAH, ELIAKIM, SHEBNA, *and* JOAH. *All take places just outside the Great Gate, looking toward the place where the camp of the Assyrians has been. Crowd gathers around them.*)

ISAIAH (*to* KING *and* PEOPLE) : O people that dwellest in Zion at Jerusalem, thou shalt weep no more. He hath surely been gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry. And he will give thee the rain for thy seed wherewith thou shalt sow the ground, and it shall be fat and plenteous.

Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: thy heart shall muse on the terror; where is he that counted, where is he that weighed the tribute, where is he that counted the towers?

Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities; thine eyes see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tent that shall not be removed, the stakes whereof shall never be plucked up, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there Jehovah shall be with us in majesty. For Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our lawgiver, Jehovah is our King, he hath saved us!

ISAIAH, KING, *and* PEOPLE (*unite in singing*):

THE SONG OF DELIVERANCE—PS. 46

God is our strength and refuge high:
A sure and present help is he,
When dark and troublous days are nigh:
Hence free from fear our hearts shall be.
Tho' earthquakes move the world,
And hills 'midst seas be hurled,
Though waters of the deep
In turmoil roar and leap,
And swelling shake the mountains steep.

A river flows, whose waters clear
The city of our God make glad,
The holy tabernacles, where
The Highest One his dwelling made.
In midst of her hath God
Established his abode;
No trouble can her move,
For God her help will prove,

When morning light dawns from above.
The nations rage, the kingdoms shake,
His voice goes forth, earth melts away.
The Lord of hosts our part doth take,
And Jacob's God is shield and stay.
Come then, let all draw near,
And view with holy fear
The works surpassing thought
Jehovah's arm hath wrought,
What ruins he on earth hath brought.

To earth's remotest bounds he turns
Wars into peace: he breaks the bow;
He cuts the spear, the chariot burns.
That I am God, be still and know:
  Among the heathen I
  Will be exalted high;
  On earth supreme. The Lord
  Of hosts doth aid afford,
And Jacob's God is shield and sword.

(*Tune, "The River Flows," The Psalter.*)

(*The church hymn, "God Is the Refuge of His Saints," may be substituted.*)

4. PAUL THE FAR-SIGHTED

Synopsis

Act I. Scene 1. Saul of Tarsus in the School of Gamaliel. Discussion of the "Sect of the Nazarenes."

Scene 2. Saul Receiving His Commission from the High Priest. Starting for Damascus to persecute the Nazarenes.

Act II. Scene 1. A Noonday Vision on the Damascus Road.

Scene 2. Developing New Ability to See. Saul in the school of the Master.—Arabia.

Act III. The End of the Road. A night-time vision of a new continent.

Act IV. Scene 1. Looking Beyond Worldly Wisdom. Paul on Mars Hill, Athens..

Scene 2. Looking Ahead to Suffering. Farewell to the Ephesian Elders.

Act V. Scene 1. Paul the Prisoner before the King. The plea before King Agrippa.

Scene 2. The Prisoner Takes Command. On the sinking ship in the storm.

Scene 3. The Prisoner's Triumphant Farewell. Paul dictating his last message.

The Musical Program

At the close of Act I. Solo, "Fear Not Ye, O Israel."

Act II. Scene 2. Quartet or Solo, "Open My Eyes that I May See" (Scott).

Act III. Quartet, "Send Thou, O Lord, to Every Place" (Gates).

Act IV. Scene 1. Organ, "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today, Alleluia."

Scene 2. Violin, "In the Hour of Trial, Jesus Plead for Me" (Montgomery).

Act V. Scene 1. Solo, "The Holy Hour" (W. M. Clark; music, "The Rosary," Nevin).

Scene 2. "Fierce Was the Wild Billow" (Anatolius), or, "Thou Art My Shepherd" (Thalheimer).

Scene 3. Quartet, "Hark, Hark, My Soul, Angelic Songs Are Swelling" (Faber).

ACT I

Scene 1. Saul of Tarsus in the School of Gamaliel

Setting: the "Terrace" in the Court of Herod's Temple at Jerusalem. Chair for Rabbi Gamaliel placed on raised dais at center rear. Cushions scattered about near dais for students.

Characters: Rabbi Gamaliel, leader of one of most prominent rabbinical schools in Jerusalem.

Saul of Tarsus, a young student, recently arrived from Tarsus.

Samuel ben Ezra, a fellow student.

Other students.

(*Enter* Saul *and* Samuel.)

Saul: Verily friend Samuel, my heart is greatly disturbed at this news thou bringest me concerning this sect of the Nazarenes. Is it verily true, as thou sayest, that they actually worship this despised leader of theirs who hath been crucified by the Romans? Know they nothing at all of our ancient Law which saith, "Cursed be he that hangeth on a tree"? In truth, methinks, they must be possessed of demons.

Samuel ben Ezra (*sadly*): Yea, in solemn truth have I told thee, my friend. Thou hast but now arrived from the far-away city of Tarsus, and so thou hast not yet seen and heard these troublesome people. They have not yet gone as far as thy city, but thou mayest travel throughout all Judea and Galilee, yea, and even unto Damascus, they tell me, and everywhere wilt thou find this sect of trouble-makers. But it is here in Jerusalem that they are most troublesome of all. One hears every day of new converts they are making to their strange doctrines. Yea, even at the Gate Beautiful of this Temple did two of their number, but a short time ago, bring to pass a most strange happening. (*Lowering his voice and glancing around apprehensively.*) I did not see it for myself, but one of the other students in this School of Gamaliel saw it all, and I had the story from him. It seemeth that these two leaders of the Sect of the Nazarenes were entering the Temple Court, and a lame beggar, who hath long been used to lie at the Gate Beautiful and

ask alms of the passers-by, asked alms of them, as his custom was. Instead of handing him some small coins, one of these leaders of the Nazarenes, looking intently upon the beggar, said: "Silver and gold have I none, but what I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." And he took the beggar by the hand, and the man, who had been lame from the day of his birth, leaped to his feet and walked! Didst ever hear of such foolery?

SAUL (*vehemently*): Blasphemy! Blasphemy! naught else! And what did the captain of the Temple Guard and the Sanhedrin unto these two malefactors? Of course they were punished?

SAMUEL (*sadly*): Nay! They did but put them in prison till the morning and command them to teach no more in the name of the Nazarene. But this they insolently refused to do. I fear the Sanhedrin itself is at its wits' ends to know what to do with these heretics. But hush, yonder cometh our beloved master, the great Gamaliel.

(*Enter* RABBI GAMALIEL, *with great dignity, followed by group of students. He carries a large scroll. Takes his place in the chair on the dais, while all the students bow low before him; they seat themselves on the cushions at* GAMALIEL'S *feet.*)

GAMALIEL (*unrolling scroll and reading*):

My son, if thou wilt receive my words,
And lay up my commandments with thee:
So as to incline thine ear to wisdom,
And apply thine heart unto understanding;
Yea, if thou cry after discernment,
And lift up thy voice for understanding:
If thou seek her as silver,
And search for her as for hid treasures:
Then shalt thou understand the fear of Jehovah,
And find the knowledge of God.
For Jehovah giveth wisdom;
Out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding
He layeth up sound wisdom for the upright:
He is a shield to them that walk in integrity;
That he may guard the paths of justice,
And preserve the way of his saints. (*Prov. 2 : 1-8.*)

(*Closes roll and appears to invite questions.*)

SAUL: Oh, Master, what shall be done unto those who seek wisdom in other ways than by the study and meditation upon our ancient Law? And what if they shall even teach others a path of error? Shall they not be punished?

GAMALIEL: Of a truth, my son, punishment awaiteth those who walk not after our Holy Law. Yea, and for those who teach others a path of error there shall be meted punishment more severe.

SAUL: What shall be done then, unto these leaders of this Sect of the Nazarenes? I have but now returned to this holy place, and some years have gone by since I formerly sat here at thy feet, most noble Gamaliel, years spent in mine own native city of Tarsus, where we have had none of these meddlesome teachers of error. And now, most noble Teacher, I am told that these troublesome people are even profaning the very gates of the Temple itself with their magical deeds in the name of their despised dog of a Nazarene leader who was crucified by the Romans. What shall be done unto such pernicious teachers of error as these? Shall they not be scourged and cast into prison and driven out of the land, lest all the people who know not the Law in its purity be contaminated with these blasphemous teachings of the worship of a man who was crucified upon a cross?

GAMALIEL: Right gladly do we welcome thee back to the city of thy fathers, my son, and to this circle of thy fellow students. And it rejoiceth my heart to behold in thee so ardent a defender of our ancient Law. But as to what shall be done unto these Nazarenes? (*Very thoughtfully.*) Verily, my son, thou hast asked of me a question hard to answer. Methinks I can but say unto thee what I said unto the Sanhedrin but recently, when two of these men, leaders of this sect, were brought before us: If this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown: but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them; lest haply ye be found even to be fighting against God. (*Rising.*) Nay, my son, I cannot tell thee that they should be punished and driven from our holy city, for I know not yet whether they be poor deluded mortals who deserve our pity for their folly, or dangerous criminals who deserve the lash for their evil deeds. The days of the future will declare it. Farewell for now.

(*Exit* GAMALIEL, *head bowed in thought. All students stand watching him go.*)

SAMUEL (*to* SAUL): Did I not tell thee? Thou dost see how even our great Gamaliel knoweth not what to do with these blasphemers! I tell thee, friend Saul (*lowering his voice*), that the men of the Sanhedrin are old men, and they lack the fire of youth. If this scourge in our city is to be stamped out, it must be through leaders who are young and strong and who fear naught. Yea, through such men as thyself, friend Saul, verily, methinks that thou art come to the Holy City just now for this very time, and that God hath guided thy footsteps hither that thou mightest bring to judgment these teachers of error and blasphemy. If thou wilt take the place of leadership, thou wilt find Theophilus, the son of Annas, our new high priest, very ready and willing to accept thy service in this great cause. And I assure thee, friend Saul, that thou canst count on the aid of all thy former fellow students who knew thee as one of the best disputants in the School of Gamaliel. Verily, they will all rejoice that thou art returned again to Jerusalem. And they are ready, eager, to seek out and punish these Nazarenes; they wait only for a leader. Fare thee well.

SAUL (*left alone*): Verily, the city of our fathers hath fallen on evil days, when such evil fellows as these Nazarenes are teaching their pernicious doctrines even in the courts of the sacred Temple itself, and even our great teacher, Gamaliel, knoweth not what to say or do concerning them! Truly, a leader is needed, and it may be that the God of our fathers hath indeed sent me to Jerusalem at this very time for such a purpose. It is even as friend Samuel ben Ezra hath said, I have been a zealous student of the ancient Law of our fathers, and, though I would not speak boastfully, there be few men of my age who know that Law better than I. Of the straitest sect of our religion I have lived a Pharisee. (*With determination.*) If Jerusalem needeth a leader to stamp out this troublesome sect of the Nazarenes, then will I be that leader. And those despised Nazarenes! (*Clenching his fists.*) Verily, they shall repent bitterly of their folly, and shall suffer for their blasphemy. Yea, speedily shall they be cut off, and the holy city be purged from the stain of this false teaching.

I will go at once to see the High Priest Theophilus, son of Annas. Methinks friend Samuel was right, and he will welcome a Pharisee to do what he dare not do.

(*Curtain.*)

SCENE 2. A COMMISSION FROM THE HIGH PRIEST

Setting: Ornately furnished room in the Palace of the High Priest.

Characters: Theophilus, son of Annas, High Priest, Saul of Tarsus, enthusiastic young persecutor, Servant.

(*Enter* THEOPHILUS.)

THEOPHILUS (*musing*): Verily, this young Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, is indeed like a firebrand in his zeal for the Law of the Fathers. He hath gone about this city of Jerusalem with the eye of a hawk to seek out those troublers of our peace, those despised Nazarenes, and punish them for their misdeeds. Yea, he hath entered into every house and searched them out and dragged them before our Council, and some he hath committed to prison, and some hath he driven out of the city.

Yea, I have been told how with joy gleaming in his face he watched the rude rabble stone to death that man Stephen whom we had before us. Saul of Tarsus hath helped mightily in bringing to pass the great fact that at last the Holy City is rid of these pests, and we can once more conduct our sacred worship in the holy temple, unmolested by the strange deeds of their leaders and the crowds which followed them everywhere. Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel, who hath delivered us from this annoyance!

And truly, it pleaseth me much that this man Saul of Tarsus hath come to Jerusalem at this very time. Verily, matters have fallen out well for the house of Annas!

(*Enter* SERVANT, *bowing before* THEOPHILUS.)

SERVANT: Master, one Saul, of Tarsus in Cilicia, is without, and would have speech with thee on a most urgent matter.

THEOPHILUS: Bid him enter at once. Perchance he cometh with some new idea for the rooting out of this evil teaching.

(*Exit* SERVANT. *Enter* SAUL, *bowing before the* HIGH PRIEST.)

Welcome, friend Saul, thou art a faithful follower of the brave men of old who were faithful to the Law of the Fathers. Comest thou with more tidings of those evil Nazarenes?

SAUL (*with indignation*): Yea, O most excellent Theophilus, tidings in truth. Thou knowest how we have searched them out in every house in Jerusalem, and how thou hast sentenced many of

them to stripes and imprisonment, and how many of them escaped out of my hand, having a warning of my coming? It hath but now been brought to my attention that many of these people have fled even unto Damascus, and that ancient city is becoming a nest of these pernicious pests.

Therefore have I come unto thee, O High Priest, to ask of thee authority and a commission to go unto the rulers of the synagogues in that city of Damascus, commanding their aid in finding out any of this Way, that I may bring them bound in chains unto Jerusalem, where thou and the Sanhedrin may judge them most justly and punish them in appropriate measure for their sins. I tell thee, O most excellent Theophilus (*raising his voice and gesticulating most violently*) that unless we who revere and honor the Law of the Fathers shall join all our forces to stamp out this evil teaching, not only here in Jerusalem, but throughout all our land, and in every land whither the Faithful have gone, I fear me that there may come a day when this strange and pernicious teaching shall be known everywhere, and the common people, who know not the Law in its purity, will be led away into the paths of error which leads to destruction. The matter is urgent and cannot wait. Canst thou give me the authority and the commission at once?

THEOPHILUS (*most cordially*) : Verily, friend Saul, thy coming and thy request are most auspicious. I was but now thinking of all thou hast accomplished in freeing Jerusalem from the taint of this false teaching, and thanking God that he hath sent thee to the Holy City for this very time. Yea, in very truth thou shalt have the authority and the commission, and there shall go also private letters to some of my friends among the rulers of the synagogues in Damascus, which will make thy task all the easier. (*Lowering his voice.*) And not this alone, my friend, I will give thee also a letter to my friend the Ethnarch of Aretas, who hath the charge of affairs in Damascus, asking him to aid thee. And I doubt not that he will do as I ask. Do thou go at once to make ready for the journey, and I will call my scribe and dictate the writings that they may be in readiness for thee as soon as thou shalt have prepared thee for the start. (*Lifting his hand in benediction.*) And may the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel go with thee and bless thy journey.

(*Curtain.*)

ACT II

Scene 1. A Noonday Vision on the Damascus Road

Setting: The road to Damascus—very barren, no trees for shade, mountains in the distance, left, glimpses of white houses amid green trees in distance, right, with a glint of sunlight on a stream. Scene flooded with strong white light to suggest blazing noonday sun.

Characters: Saul of Tarsus, Samuel ben Ezra, servants, and guards. Hidden speaker for the words of Jesus to Saul.

Servant (*apologetically*): Master, shall we not halt for the noonday rest? Thou perceivest that the sun is already high in the heavens and that the heat is well-nigh overpowering? Wilt thou not give the command to halt, that thy servants may erect thy tent, to protect thee from the rays of the noonday sun, and prepare for thee the midday meal?

Samuel ben Ezra (*hastily, before* Saul *has a chance to reply*): Yea, friend Saul, thou shouldest heed the word of thy servant; we have been pressing on with rapid pace, and now we have come in sight of the city to which we journey. See, yonder, how the white houses gleam among the green trees, and note that glint of the sun on the beautiful waters of the lovely Abana! Ah, there is beauty indeed in the midst of barrenness and desolation. And thou, Saul of Tarsus, hast a great work to do in yonder city. I pray thee, rest now, that thou mayest be yet the most strong to do that for which thou art come.

Saul (*impatiently*): Nay, pitch no tents, and stop for no midday meal, for the King's business requireth haste: and I am on the business of the King, Jehovah of Hosts. Nay, that which I have come to do must be done speedily. Who knoweth but that while I might be resting in the shelter of my tent within sight of yonder Damascus, even while I rested, some of these cursed Nazarenes might be making new converts to their doctrines of error? Nay! We must press on with redoubled energy. On to Damascus!

(*As he utters these words, platform is flooded with very strong intense white light, concentrated on* Saul, *but including the whole party in its rays. Immediately every one in the party drops to the ground, covering his face in his mantle or hiding it in his arms.*)

THE VOICE OF JESUS: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

SAUL (*half trying to look up, but speaking in awe-struck tone*): Who art thou, Lord?

(*Rest of party rise slowly, shading their eyes with their hands or mantles, looking around wonderingly, half looking up in terror, then glancing at* SAUL, *who remains prostrate on the ground.*)

THE VOICE OF JESUS: I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

SAUL (*humbly*): What shall I do, Lord?

THE VOICE OF JESUS: Arise, and go into Damascus; and there shall it be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

(SAUL *rises very slowly, attempts to pick up his staff, gropes for it, stumbles a bit uncertainly, calls.*)

SAUL: Samuel, Samuel, where art thou? I cannot see thee for the brightness of the light.

SAMUEL BEN EZRA: Here, right at thy hand, friend Saul, and here is thy staff. (*Handing it to him, but puzzled as* SAUL *gropes for it.*) Canst thou not see me now, here at thy side? Nor thy staff, here at thy hand? (*Aside.*) God of mercy, deliver us! He hath been struck blind.

SAUL (*very gently*): Ah, now I feel thee near, and my trusty staff. Didst thou hear the voice which spake with me?

SAMUEL (*puzzled*): A voice? Nay, we have heard nothing. We saw a marvelous light, but a voice? Didst thou dream?

SAUL: Dream? Nay, nay. (*In tone of awe.*) I saw Him and heard his voice, and he bade me go into Damascus. But I cannot see, take thou my hand, friend Samuel, and lead me into the city.

(*The brilliant light fades away, as* SAMUEL *leads* SAUL *on toward Damascus. Curtain.*)

SCENE 2. DEVELOPING NEW ABILITY TO SEE

PAUL IN THE SCHOOL OF THE MASTER

Setting: Lonely mountain gorge in Arabia. Hint of mountains in the distance left and right. Large boulders in center. Whole scene suggestive of grandeur, isolation, and the majestic power of the Creator.

Religious Education
EXHIBIT

Character: Saul of Tarsus.

SAUL: Verily, the ways of the Lord are past finding out; he guideth men in strange paths.

Not in the Temple in Jerusalem, nor yet in the high priest's palace did he appear to me, but on that road to Damascus. And how clearly I remember the tones of his voice as I heard him say unto me, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." And what a day that was in the home of Judas in the street called Straight, when Brother Ananias came unto me in my blindness and despair, when I could neither eat nor drink, and called me by that dear name, Brother, saying "Brother Saul, receive thy sight," and immediately the scales fell from off my eyes, and I saw clearly. Yea, much more clearly than ever before. And then was I baptized in the name of Jesus and was strengthened.

And now for these many days have I been here in the wilderness, meditating upon the strange mission which the Master hath for me. Yea, now I begin to see clearly that it behooved the Master to suffer and even to die upon the cross, that the Prophet Isaiah was indeed inspired of God when he said long ago:

"Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Long have I thought of Israel's Messiah as coming in power and great glory to deliver his people from the tyranny of the Romans; coming to reign as an earthly king in glorious pomp and make our holy city, Jerusalem, the center of the world's kingdom. And I was very zealous for God, according to the strict law of our fathers.

But since I have been here in this wilderness these many days, pondering concerning the dealings of God with his people, new light hath come to me. I am able now to see far beyond the narrow limits of my former vision, and perceive clearly many things which were formerly hidden from my view.

Yea, wonderful though it be, God hath clearly revealed to me in these days of quiet meditation that this wonderful gospel is for all men, Jew and Greek, barbarian and Scythian, bond or free.

For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith; as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

I believe that now is my time of waiting and meditation and study here in the wilderness come to an end, and God is calling me to go back to Damascus, that there where I had planned to persecute those of this Way, I may proclaim unto them and unto all the Jews this wondrous revelation which God hath made known unto me.

(*Looking upward in prayer, the light of his new-found joy on his face.*) Master, I know not where thou wilt lead my feet, but I am ready to follow on, all the way, yea, even unto death.

(*Picks up staff and goes off briskly.*)

ACT III

At the End of the Road

Setting: Sunset-time just outside the city of Troas. Roman road, city showing in the distance, with sun just sinking into the sea.

Characters: Paul, Silas, and Timothy, each carrying long staff, with bundle over shoulder, as though on a long journey on foot. Later, Luke the Physician.

(*Enter* Paul, Silas, *and* Timothy.)

Paul (*to* Timothy): Look, my son, yonder is the end of the road. The far-famed city of Troas lieth just below us, and yonder is the sea which divideth Asia from the continent of Europe. See, just in the line of the setting sun, that great mountain peak. It can be no other than Mount Athos in Macedonia. Ah, my son, our eyes are looking for the first time upon Macedonia—and a new continent. A continent where never yet the name of Jesus hath been proclaimed; a continent which no messenger of the Cross hath yet claimed for him who hung thereon. A continent of worshipers of gods many and lords many, of followers of pleasure who say, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die," and of followers of gain who heap up gold like stones and bow down and worship it, and of followers of power, for there to the West, beyond yonder mount in many leagues over land and sea, that great Egnatian Way leadeth unto Rome. Rome, the magnificent; Rome, the mistress of the world! Rome, which needeth so sadly to know Him who is

the King of kings and Lord of lords, whose power is spiritual and eternal instead of physical and temporal! Rome lieth yonder! Yea, and in the same western continent lieth Athens, the home of philosophers and poets and sculptors, and Corinth, the busy commercial metropolis. And we are here tonight at the end of the road in Asia. Europe lieth before us!

TIMOTHY: "The end of the road" it is in truth, my father; but why hath God led us thus far? Dost thou remember how we desired once and again on this journey to turn aside to visit the cities of the province of Asia, and of Mysia, yea, and of Bithynia also? What fruitful fields they were for thy message, O Paul?

PAUL: Yea, son Timothy, very well do I remember all this, and how even though I would have entered into each one of these fields thou namest, the Spirit of Jesus suffered us not. And I doubt not that we have been brought to this end of the road in Asia for some very special purpose. Who knoweth, perchance God is leading us unto a new continent, to claim a new land for him?

But the sun hath set already, the night cometh on, and the city is still a little distance off. Let us rest here beside the road for the night, even as we have many nights before on this journey.

(*The three lie down beside the road, placing their bundles for pillows, and wrapping themselves in their mantles. The light fades away into a deep blue, suggesting midnight.*)

(*Enter from extreme rear, left, a* MAN *in white Greek garb, moving slowly, until he stands over* PAUL, *near enough to touch him. Touches him gently, and moves a little distance away. Dim white spot light.*)

THE MAN OF MACEDONIA (*stretching out his arms appealingly*): Come over into Macedonia and help us.

(*Light fades away.* MAN OF MACEDONIA *disappears.* PAUL *rouses slightly and lies down again. Blue light gradually changes to pink, then to amber, suggesting morning. The three travelers stir,* PAUL *rising first, and rousing* SILAS *and* TIMOTHY.)

PAUL: Rouse ye, my brothers, the new day hath come, and I have glad news for you, my brothers.

SILAS: News, Brother Paul? Doth it concern our being here at the end of the road? We are wide-awake at once, tell us quickly.

TIMOTHY: Glad news, my Father? Hath God sent us an answer to our prayer?

PAUL (*gladly*) : That he hath, indeed, my brothers! The Lord be praised! He hath never failed in his guidance of my feet since the day on the Damascus road when I asked him, "What shall I do, Lord?" Listen, my brothers; last night during the hours of slumber, I saw most clearly a man of Macedonia, standing by me, and with outstretched hands crying out in appealing tone, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." Now I know why it was that the Spirit suffered us not to preach in the province of Asia, nor to enter into the cities of Mysia nor yet of Bithynia. God is guiding us to the conquest of a new continent in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. We shall proclaim that blessed name in Macedonia, yea, in Athens and Corinth, and perchance, even in Rome itself! Come, let us hasten into the city and find a vessel upon which we may embark for Neapolis and Philippi.

(*Picks up staff, adjusts mantle and bundle, and prepares to start.*)

SILAS AND TIMOTHY: The Lord be praised for his guidance! Yea, let us hasten at once. On to Macedonia.

(*As the three near exit, left,* LUKE, THE PHYSICIAN, *in Greek costume, meets them.*)

LUKE: The blessing of the Lord be upon thee, my brethren.

PAUL: And upon thee, my friend. But whence comest thou, and dost thou know us?

LUKE: From across yonder sea have I come, my friends; a man of Macedonia am I. And thou art the man who art carrying the message of the good news to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. Yea, Macedonia needs thee and thy message, Brother Paul. In yonder harbor waits a ship ready to sail this very day to Neapolis. Wilt thou go with me?

PAUL: Blessed be the name of the Lord! Verily, he hath fulfilled his promise of old that he would "instruct and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go." Let us hasten, and may the blessing of God be upon us.

(*Exeunt all.*)

ACT IV

SCENE 1. LOOKING BEYOND WORLDLY WISDOM

Setting: The Agora, or Market-place, of Athens, the Acropolis showing in the distance.

Characters: Paul, Dionysius the Areopagite, Damaris, Callias the Stoic, Danaus the Epicurean, group of Athenians.

Lighting: Amber flood.

(*Enter* PAUL, *alone sadly.*)

PAUL: In Athens at last! But truly the guidance of God hath been passing strange! My loved companions, Silas and Timothy, have been left in Macedonia, and I have been compelled to come on to Athens alone. Many things have I suffered already in Macedonia for the name of Jesus—imprisonment and stripes in Philippi, a mob in Thessalonica, and again in Berea. But in each of these cities some have received the word with gladness and singleness of heart, and they are faithful to Christ in the midst of persecution.

Of a truth this city hath in it very much of beauty in art, and many men wise in their own conceits. Will these Gentiles listen even here in this center of culture and learning to the story of Jesus? Verily, these philosophers with all their worldly wisdom need that wisdom from above, which is pure and peaceable. Behold, here come some of them at this moment. Perchance I may have the opportunity of disputing with them and thus showing them the superiority of the gospel message to the words of worldly wisdom of even Socrates or Plato.

(*Enter* CALLIAS *and group of* ATHENIANS.)

CALLIAS (*to* ATHENIANS): Behold, here is that new teacher of whom I told you but yesterday. Let us see what he will say when confronted with the unanswerable logic of our great teacher Zeno, founder of the great School of Stoic Philosophy. (*Gesture toward* PAUL.) Ho, Jew, come hither. Dost thou know of the teachings of the great Athenian, Zeno?

PAUL: Yea, long ago I heard of Zeno and his teachings in mine own city of Tarsus in Cilicia, where is located one of the greatest of your Greek universities.

CALLIAS (*with sly wink at his comrades*): And what thinkest thou, Jew, of the great founder of our school and of his teachings?

Canst thou match them? Or, peradventure, thou canst give unto us some wisdom even greater than the teaching that the wise man living according to reason is perfect and self-sufficing; that he is unmoved by the storms of human passion and by the change of outward circumstances.

PAUL (*quietly*): Yea, a wise man in truth was your great teacher, Zeno, but his wisdom was of the earth, earthy, and not from above. Long ago one of the poets of the land of my fathers, inspired from above, sang a great hymn to wisdom:

> "Where shall wisdom be found?
> And where is the place of understanding?
> God understandeth the way thereof,
> And he knoweth the place thereof.
> He established it, yea, and searched it out.
> And unto man he said,
> Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;
> And to depart from evil is understanding."

DIONYSIUS (*to* CALLIAS): Verily, the Jew hath thee there, Callias. Of a truth "to depart from evil is wisdom," but about this "fear of the Lord," that I know not. Ha, yonder come some of the Epicureans, yea, and Danaus with them. What will they say to this strange new philosophy?

(*Enter* DANAUS *and group of Epicurean Philosophers.*)

Ho, Danaus, here is a disputant worthy of thy mettle. He hath but now vanquished our good friend Callias with a quotation from one of his ancient poets. Suppose thou dost enlighten this Jew here with a bit of the wisdom which droppeth from the lips of our Epicurean teachers. Doubtless in his austere religion he hath no chance at the real joys of life and needeth the enlightenment which thou canst give him.

DANAUS (*to* PAUL): Wouldst inquire concerning the teachings of the wise Epicurus, the founder of our great school? Thou art already beginning to show signs of wisdom, Jew, that thou gavest no heed to the strange doctrines of these Stoics here, but didst wait for the coming of the real wise men, my friends here and myself. Listen with care, then, while I unfold to thee the teachings of the greatest of Greek teachers. All things which thou

seest came to be by merest accident. The universe needs no governing nor guiding power, but makes and maintains its own laws, courses, and conclusions. Some philosophers have, indeed, taught the existence of some sort of Supreme Being, which, if such there be apart from the material things which thou dost see about thee, and thine own self which thou dost know and feel, is far away and indifferent. And when the atoms which comprise man's body are dissipated, that is the end of all things for him.

PAUL (*sternly*): So the end of the teaching of your great founder would be, Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. If there is no Creator and no Controlling Hand in the affairs of the universe and of human life, thou doest well to gratify thy human passions and to indulge in pleasure unto the extreme. If there be no Judge of human conduct, no duty to our fellow men, no punishment for sin, no reward for righteousness, no beginning, but only an ending behind which lies nothingness, then well may men grovel in the mire of sinful pleasure, forgetting all that is high and noble, all that is pure and true.

But the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hinder the truth in unrighteousness; because that which is known of God is manifest in them, for God manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of his since the creation are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity, so that they are without excuse.

VOICE FROM THE CROWD: What doth this babbler say?

SECOND VOICE: He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods.

THIRD VOICE: Let us bring him unto the Areopagus.

DIONYSIUS: It is well spoken. (*To* PAUL.) May we know what this new teaching is, which is spoken by thee.

(CROWD *surrounds* PAUL, *moves along with him to center of platform, rear.*)

PAUL (*mounting platform at rear and signaling for silence*): Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are a very religious people. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription,

TO AN UNKNOWN GOD

What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you. The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and he made of one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons and the bounds of their habitations; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us; for in him we live and move and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, "For we are also his offspring."

Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man. The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent; inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

DANAUS (*mockingly*): "Raised him from the dead" Behold, what strange things this babbler setteth forth! As though it could be possible that one should rise from the dead! Listen no more, my friends, let us eat and drink and be merry, for tomorrow cometh the end of all things.

(*Exit* DANAUS *and his friends.*)

CALLIAS (*carelessly, to* PAUL): We will hear thee concerning this yet again.

(*Exit* CALLIAS *and his followers.*)

DIONYSIUS: Where dwellest thou, my friend? I would fain have conversation with thee concerning this strange new teaching which thou settest forth. Especially would I learn more concerning this Man whom thou sayest God hath ordained and hath raised from the dead. Can it be that one should rise from the dead? But if this God of thine hath indeed created the universe and all things therein, why might he not even raise a man from the dead? I will go with thee to hear more of this strange new teaching.

DAMARIS: I, too, have been attracted by thy message, and would fain know more concerning this Man of whom thou dost speak. Wilt thou teach us of him?

PAUL (*joyously*): Right gladly will I tell you, my friends, of him whom God hath sent to be the Saviour of the Greek as well as of the Jew. Let us go to some quiet place where we may talk together of the Master's life and death and resurrection.

(*Exit* PAUL, *accompanied by* DIONYSIUS, DAMARIS, *and a few others.*)

SCENE 2. FAREWELL TO THE EPHESIAN ELDERS

Setting: The seashore at Miletus; the vessel upon which Paul is sailing to Jerusalem is anchored a short distance from the shore.

Characters: Paul, Luke, Timothy, the Elders of Ephesus (six or more) and a few women of the Ephesian Church.

(*Enter, right,* PAUL *and* LUKE.)

PAUL (*shading his eyes with his hand, as though looking down the road toward Ephesus*): Timothy hath been gone some time now with my message to the Elders of the Church at Ephesus, asking them to come to me here. It is time for them to come. Would that I might have gone unto Ephesus myself, that I might have greeted the entire church there! But I know not just how soon the captain of the ship might sail from here, and we must of a surety be in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost.

LUKE: They will surely come, never fear. They love thee too deeply, Paul, to miss any chance of seeing thee. And if Timothy doth tell them, as I doubt not he will, how thy face is set to go up to Jerusalem, then surely they will come and speedily.

PAUL: They come! Blessed be the Lord, who hath permitted mine eyes to look once again on the faces of these my friends!

(*Enter, left, the group of* ELDERS OF EPHESUS, *accompanied by* TIMOTHY *and a few of the chief women of the church.*)

PAUL: The peace of Jehovah rest upon you, my brethren!

THE ELDER: And upon thee, beloved Teacher!

(*All group themselves around* PAUL, *sitting on the ground.*)

PAUL: Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, teaching

you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and Greeks repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things which shall befall me there; save that the Holy Spirit testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But I hold not my life on any account as dear unto myself, in comparison of accomplishing my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more.

ELDERS AND PEOPLE: No more! See Paul's face no more? Alas! Alas! Woe! Woe!

PAUL (*holds up his hand for silence*): And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

(*All kneel,* PAUL *prays with uplifted hands.*)

For this cause I bow my knees unto thee Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

ELDERS (*embracing* PAUL, *weeping*): Go not up unto Jerusalem, beloved Teacher. Abide thou here with us in safety and peace! Much work remaineth for thee to do. The church in Ephesus needeth sorely thy counsel and thy guidance. Go not where bonds and imprisonment await thee. Tarry with us!

PAUL: What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready, not to be bound only, but to die, at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus.

ELDERS: The will of the Lord be done!

(*Exit* PAUL, LUKE, *and* TIMOTHY *toward the ship.* ELDERS *watch them go, then turn away toward Ephesus in sadness.*)

ACT V

SCENE 1. PAUL THE PRISONER BEFORE THE KING

Setting: The judgment-hall of the palace of Festus, Roman Governor at Cæsarea. Raised dais for the governor, with extra seats for King Agrippa and Queen Bernice.

Characters: Festus, Roman Governor; Agrippa, King of Chalcis; Bernice, Sister of Agrippa; two Principal Men; Captain of the Guard; Guards; Attendants; Flower-girl; Paul the Prisoner.

(*Enter* FESTUS, *with* AGRIPPA, *preceded by* GUARDS, *followed by* PRINCIPAL MEN, *then, after brief interval,* BERNICE, *preceded by fan-bearer and flower-girl, scattering flowers in her way, followed by two* ATTENDANTS. FESTUS, AGRIPPA, *and* BERNICE *are seated on the dais.*)

FESTUS (*to* AGRIPPA): There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix, about whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, asking for sentence against him. To whom I answered, that it was not the custom of the Romans to give up any man, before that the accused have the accusers face to face and have had opportunity to make his defense concerning the matter laid against him. When therefore they were come together, I made no delay, but on the next day sat on the judgment-seat, and commanded the man to be brought. Concerning whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought no charge of such evil things as I supposed; but had certain questions against him of their own religion, and one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. And I, being perplexed how to inquire concerning these things, asked whether he would go to Jerusalem and there be judged of these matters. But when Paul had appealed to be kept for the decision of the Emperor, I commanded him to be kept till I should send him to Cæsar.

AGRIPPA: I also could wish to hear the man myself.

FESTUS (*to* GUARD): Summon the Captain of the Guard, and command him to bring hither the man Paul.

(GUARD *salutes and goes out, returning shortly with the* CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD *and* PAUL.)

FESTUS: King Agrippa, and all men who are here present with us, ye behold this man, about whom all the multitudes of the Jews made suit to me, both at Jerusalem, and here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. But I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death; and as he himself appealed to the Emperor, I determined to send him, of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and especially before thee, King Agrippa, that, after examination had, I may have somewhat to write. For it seemeth to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not withal to signify the charges against him.

AGRIPPA (*to* PAUL): Thou art permitted to speak for thyself.

PAUL: I think myself happy, King Agrippa, that I am to make my defense before thee this day touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews; especially since thou art expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

My manner of life from my youth up, which was from the beginning among my own nation and at Jerusalem, know all the Jews: having knowledge of me from the first, if they be willing to testify, that after the straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand here to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. And concerning this hope I am accused by the Jews, O King! Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead? I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this I also did in Jerusalem, and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death I gave my vote against them. And punishing them ofttimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities.

Whereupon as I journeyed unto Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun,

shining round about me and them that journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice saying unto me in the Hebrew language: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the goad." And I said, "Who art thou, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for unto this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me."

Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision; but declared both unto them of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance. For this cause the Jews seized me in the temple, and assayed to kill me. Having therefore obtained the help which is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come, how that the Christ must suffer, and how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and the Gentiles.

FESTUS (*very loudly*): Paul, thou art beside thyself; thy much learning is turning thee mad.

PAUL (*quietly*): I am not mad, most excellent Festus, but speak forth words of truth and soberness. For the King knoweth of these things, unto whom also I speak freely; for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; for this hath not been done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

AGRIPPA: In a little time thou wouldest fain make *me* a Christian!

PAUL: I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but all that hear me this day, might become such as I am except these bonds.

(AGRIPPA, *rising, motions with his hand to indicate that the*

hearing is at an end. CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD *withdraws with* PAUL. BERNICE *and* FESTUS *rise also and follow* AGRIPPA *out.*)

PRINCIPAL MAN (*to others*) : This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.

AGRIPPA (*to* FESTUS) : This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

(*Exeunt all.*)

SCENE 2. THE PRISONER TAKES COMMAND

Setting: The cabin, and later the deck, of a sinking ship on the Mediterranean Sea during a severe storm.

Characters: Paul, the Prisoner; an Angel; Luke, the Captain of the Ship; Julius, the Centurion, in command of the soldiers and the prisoners; soldiers and sailors.

Lighting: Dim blue light at first, suggesting night; white spot on Angel; dim blue softly changing to gray, suggesting daylight with clouds shutting out the sun.

(PAUL, *asleep in bunk in cabin. Enter very softly, at left,* ANGEL, *goes to* PAUL, *touches his shoulder, speaks.*)

ANGEL: Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Cæsar; and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee.

(ANGEL *disappears. Light changes to gray.* PAUL *rouses, seems to be thinking of his vision. Goes to right. Enter* SOLDIERS, SAILORS, *and* PRISONERS.)

PAUL (*loudly and confidently*) : Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have set sail from Crete, and have gotten this injury and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God whose I am, whom also I serve, saying: "Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Cæsar: and, lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee."

Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer, for I believe God, that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken unto me. But we must be cast upon a certain island.

JULIUS: The gods grant that it may be even as thou hast spoken, Paul!

CAPTAIN: Truly the gods must have spoken unto this man, for though I know this sea well, having sailed it these many years, I can see no hope of deliverance for us. "A certain island"? Can it be that we are nearing land, and I knew it not? We must take the soundings, and at once. Ha, what is that I hear? Listen! It soundeth indeed like unto the noise of the breakers upon the rocks! Hasten, sailors! Heave the lead at once!

SAILORS: Aye, aye, sir!

(*Exeunt* SAILORS. *Noise as of heaving the lead.*)

VOICE OF SAILOR (*from behind scenes*): Fifteen fathoms, sir!

CAPTAIN: Verily this prisoner is right! What manner of man is this? A Jewish prisoner, yet he knoweth more about this sea than I myself! A strange man, in very truth! Ho, sailors, let go four anchors at once and from the stern.

VOICES OF SAILORS (*from behind scenes*): Aye, aye, sir!

(*Noise of splash, as though order was being obeyed.* SAILORS *appear at back of stage, slinking along to boat and prepare to launch it.*)

PAUL (*to* JULIUS, *indicating action of the sailors*): Behold, the sailors are about to flee out of the ship! Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

JULIUS (*to* SOLDIERS): Cut loose the boat!

(SOLDIERS *at once spring to ropes of the boat, which they cut with their swords.*)

PAUL (*to entire company*): This day is the fourteenth day that ye have been anxiously waiting for the storm to cease, and have fasted, eating little or nothing. Wherefore, I beseech you to take some food, for this is for your safety, for there shall not a hair perish from the head of any of you. (*Taking a piece of bread and looking upward.*)

O God, maker of heaven and earth and all that in them is, I thank thee that thou dost provide food for our bodies and guidance for our souls. We praise thee for thy preservation in this storm, and thank thee for the assurance that we shall all be delivered from danger. Bless thou this bread to our need now. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Amen.

(*Begins to eat, others follow his example. Curtain.*)

Scene 3. The Vision of the Crown

Setting: A Roman prison; damp and dark.

Characters: Paul the Prisoner; Roman Guard; Luke, the Beloved Physician.

Lighting: Dim amber flood, white spot on Paul at end.

Paul (*pacing back and forth across his dungeon, as far as the chain which attaches his wrist to that of his* Guard *will permit*): In Rome again! But alone! No longer am I permitted to dwell in my own hired house, and to proclaim the gospel tidings to the throngs who come to see me. Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world; Crescens hath gone to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia; Erastus remained at Corinth; Trophimus I left at Miletus sick—would that I might know how it fareth with him! Only Luke is with me in Rome. Methinks he will come this day to comfort me in my loneliness as he hath in other days. Yea, he cometh even now.

(*Enter* Luke, *saluting* Guard, *embracing* Paul.)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who hath given unto me the blessing of thy friendship, Luke, and the comfort of thy presence here in my dungeon.

Luke: The protecting power of our God be over thee, beloved Paul, here in thy prison, even as it hath in other days in perils by land and by sea. But tell me, my friend, how hath it gone with thee at thy trial. I was not permitted to be there with thee, though with certain of the brethren, Eubulus, Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, I was engaged in earnest prayer for thee during the time of thy trial.

Paul: I thank thee, my friend, for this good news that thou and these others did take thought for me, and did pray unto the Father in my behalf. Somehow, though perhaps not in just the way that thou dost expect, that prayer will be answered. At my defense no one took my part, and Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil; the Lord will render to him according to his works. But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me; that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the Gentiles (of whom a great throng was present) might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. I am persuaded that the

Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be the glory forever and ever.

Didst thou bring parchment with thee, Luke?

LUKE (*pulling out a roll of parchment from folds of his garment*) : Yea, friend Paul, it is here. Wouldest thou dictate a message to some of thy friends?

PAUL: Yes, I would send one more message to my beloved son in the faith, Timothy. Wilt thou write it for me? These old eyes are growing dim, and there is but little light in this dungeon.

(LUKE *prepares to write.*)

To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, having been reminded of the unfeigned faith that is in thee: which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and, I am persuaded in thee also. Thou therefore, my child, be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life; that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier. And if also a man contend in the games, he is not crowned except he have contended lawfully. Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel; wherein I suffer hardship unto bonds, as a malefactor; but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the elects' sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. Faithful is the saying: For if we died with him, we shall also live with him: if we endure, we shall also reign with him; if we shall deny him, he will also deny us; if we are faithless, he abideth faithful; for he cannot deny himself. Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth.

Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.

I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, by his appearing and his king-

dom; preach the word: be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and teaching.

But be sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry. For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day: and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.

(PAUL *stands with uplifted hands and a far-away look in his eyes as white spot light fades and hidden quartet sings "Hark, Hark, My Soul," by F. W. Faber.*)

Hark, hark, my soul, angelic songs are swelling!
O'er earth's green fields and ocean's wave-beat shore;
How sweet the truth those blessed strains are telling
Of that new life when sin shall be no more.

CHORUS

Angels of Jesus, Angels of light,
Singing to welcome the pilgrims of the night.

Far, far away, like bells at evening pealing,
The voice of Jesus sounds o'er land and sea,
And laden souls, by thousands meekly stealing,
Kind Shepherd, turn their weary steps to thee.

Onward we go, for still we hear them singing,
"Come weary souls, for Jesus bids you come";
And through the dark, its echoes sweetly ringing,
The music of the gospel leads us home.

Angels, sing on, your faithful watches keeping;
Sing us sweet fragments of the song above;
Till morning's joy shall end the night of weeping,
And life's long shadows break in cloudless love.

5. THE HYMN OF THE HELPER

A Dramatic Setting for Psalms 42 and 43

Characters: Reader, with clear voice, placed behind scene; Shallum ben Ezra and Heman ben Joel, exiles.

Setting: suggestion of dry brook bed.

Scene 1

Reader (*behind scene*): Shallum ben Ezra was sad. And it was not to be wondered at that he sat on the rock beside the dry, stony brook bed, with his head resting on his hands, despondent and weary. For Shallum was an exile! Far away were homeland and loved ones—near at hand only rugged hills and rocky watercourses, now dry with summer drought. And he was surrounded by enemies who, not content with making life miserable for him physically, were constantly taunting him about his religion and asking him, "Where is now thy God? Why does he not deliver thee? If he is so strong and powerful and good as thou hast said, He must certainly have forgotten all about thee."

So Shallum ben Ezra was sad. Sad because of the physical suffering of the unaccustomed life of exile, sad because of the separation from home and loved ones; but saddest of all because of the forced absence from the place where "Jehovah had caused his name to dwell." For Shallum was a Korahite, one of the family of Israel especially designated to the high honor of keeping the doors of the Temple, and of participation in the leadership of its music. Through many years now Shallum had dwelt in the courts of the Lord during the appointed time of his course each year, and had spent his days in peace and contentment in his village near Jerusalem, frequently going up to the house of the Lord.

But now all was changed: the privilege of throwing open the great gates of the Temple to the throng of early morning worshipers was no longer his. How clearly he remembered how morning after morning he had watched and waited, his hand upon the bars of the gates, for the first note of the silver trumpet. High upon the pinnacle of the Temple had stood the appointed priest, watching for the first rays of the sun to appear over the Mount of

Olives, and as the silvery note of this trumpet-call announced the dawn of the new day, Shallum ben Ezra would throw wide open the gates to the waiting congregation of worshipers who came for morning sacrifice.

An exile now in the land of the Hermons, far from his loved Jerusalem, Shallum sat sad and despondent, weary at heart. A step on the rocks of the dry brook bed caused him to look up. His friend and fellow exile, Heman ben Joel, was approaching. Sad though he was, Shallum greeted his friend with an attempt at a smile, for Heman was one of those rare souls who seem alway and everywhere to carry sunshine about with them.

HEMAN: The peace of Jehovah rest upon thee, Shallum.

(*Sits down beside* SHALLUM.)

SHALLUM: And upon thee, Heman ben Joel. (*In a bitter tone.*) But why use the familiar salutation of the homeland far away in this rocky land of exile! How can the peace of Jehovah be upon us away from Jehovah's land? How can his blessing find us in the midst of our enemies? How can our voices reach him from these rocky fastnesses, away from the Temple courts with their songs and their sacrifices? How canst thou, Heman, sweet singer as thou art, continue to smile; how canst thou find any cause for gladness in this desolate region? Surely thou canst not forget the joys of the Temple worship! Surely thy heart, like mine, must mourn "because of the oppression of the enemy."

HEMAN: Yea, my friend, my heart is, like thine, sad and lonely. I, too, yearn for the courts of the Lord and the house of our God. Even just now a group of these enemies of ours have been taunting me as I came along the way with their questions—"Where is now thy God?" I miss even as thou dost the voices of the multitude as they came up to the Temple, keeping holy day.

But why do we despair as those who have no hope, friend Shallum? Even though we are here in this far land as exiles, our loved Temple still stands and we know that even this day some one is leading the throng to worship, that sacrifices are still being offered and that our God still lives. Can we not worship him even here?

SHALLUM (*in amazement*): What, worship God *here* in this land of our enemies, away from the Temple? Worship God with-

out the burnt offering and the sacrifices of morning and evening! Nay, Heman, thou surely hast forgotten how God hath chosen Zion to put his name there—how he hath ordained that men should go up to Jerusalem year by year at the appointed time to present to him at his altar their gifts and their offerings.

READER (*behind scene*) : Just then, on a crag above them, stood for an instant outlined against the sky a noble hart, alert, graceful, strong. He had evidently come to the watercourse beside which the two friends were sitting, in search of water, for they could see him panting with thirst.

SHALLUM : Seest thou yonder hart, Heman? Even as that hart panteth for the water which is not here, so my soul longeth and thirsteth for the courts of the Lord. Lo, now, in the summertime, this watercourse is dry and hot, but dost thou not remember how in the spring, so short a time ago, its banks were overflowing with a rushing, noisy torrent, even like unto a waterspout or a mighty cataract? So it seemeth unto me that God hath dealt with me and thee, we are engulfed in the billows of his displeasure. Nay, Heman, we cannot worship him in a strange land; we are cast away from his presence.

But see, yonder are some of our enemies approaching. They come to taunt us even yet again. I cannot bear their words, they seem as heavy as lead, as though they would even crush my bones beneath the weight of their taunts. Let us hence and escape them if we may.

(*Exeunt* SHALLUM *and* HEMAN.)

READER (*behind scene*) : The days went by, as days will, even in exile, and somehow Shallum ben Ezra lived, though each day seemed longer than the last, and the ending of his exile seemed constantly farther and farther away.

SCENE 2

Characters: Same as preceding scene.
Setting: Suggestion of a hilltop.

(*Enter* SHALLUM.)

READER (*behind scene*) : A week passed before Shallum saw Heman again, but one night as he was standing on a little hill at

the sunset-time, looking out over the Jordan Valley and northward to lordly Mount Hermon towering over all, Heman climbed to his side.

(*Enter* HEMAN.)

The friends greeted each other in their customary way, and then stood in silence for a time, watching the sunset.

HEMAN: I have a new song, friend Shallum.

SHALLUM (*astonished*): What! thou hast a new song, a song *here,* in this land of exile and sadness! I knew thou wert a sweet singer in the homeland, friend Heman, but how canst thou find a song *here?* How can thy heart find any word of praise in the midst of these bitter enemies of ours?

HEMAN: I did not find it or make it, Shallum. The song came to me, as I believe every true song of praise has ever come to the singers of our people. I believe it was sent to me for cheer and hope in our sadness and sorrow, friend Shallum. And not for ours only, but I believe that somehow it will be for the helping and cheer of many others in the days that are to come. Perhaps, even—(*wistfully*) perhaps we may be permitted some time to sing it in the very courts of the Temple itself.

SHALLUM: Dost thou think it could help me, friend Heman?

HEMAN (*softly*): Yea, my friend, if it was indeed sent to me from above, as I believe, then it must have been sent for thee. Shall I sing it to thee?

THE HYMN OF THE HELPER

(Psalm 42, 43)

As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks,
So panteth my soul after thee, O God.
My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:
When shall I come and appear before God?
My tears have been my food day and night,
While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?
These things I remember, and pour out my soul within me,
How I went with the throng, and led them to the house of God,
With the voice of joy and praise, a multitude keeping holy day.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him
For the help of his countenance.

O my God, my soul is cast down within me:
Therefore do I remember thee from the land of Jordan,
And the Hermons, from the hill Mizar.
Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterfalls:
All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.
Yet Jehovah will command his lovingkindness in the daytime;
And in the night his song shall be with me,
Even a prayer unto the God of my life.
I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me?
Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?
As with a sword in my bones, mine adversaries reproach me,
While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?

Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him,
Who is the help of my countenance, and my God.

Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation:
O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.
For thou art the God of my strength; why hast thou cast me off?
Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?
Oh send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me:
Let them bring me unto thy holy hill,
And to thy tabernacles.
Then will I go unto the altar of God,
Unto God my exceeding joy;
And upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him,
Who is the help of my countenance, and my God.

READER (*behind scene*) : When the last confident tones had died away there was silence on the hilltop for a time. The sunset glow

had faded, and the deep blue sky, sprinkled with stars, seemed to brood in loving tenderness over the two friends.

SHALLUM: Heman, my friend, thou wert right. Thou didst neither find nor make that song. It hath been given from above, a melodious messenger of hope and trust. We can worship God here in this land of bitter exile, yea, anywhere, and he is here as well as in Jerusalem,

> "The help of my countenance
> And my God."

I thank thee, sweet singer, for thine own confiding trust which made it possible for God to send that song to thee.

And I thank thee, O thou God of our fathers, that thou hast revealed unto us in exile this wonderful truth, that even here we may find and worship thee, and that, hoping in thee, we believe thou wilt some day lead us

> "Unto thy holy hill
> In gladness and joy
> With the multitude keeping holy day. Amen."

X

MISSIONARY MATERIAL

1. THE CHALLENGE OF THE VOICE

Stewardship in Pageantry

Solo, or Quartet, illustrated by pantomime by five girls, in white costumes.

From Age to Age They Gather

(By F. L. Hosmer, tune, " Battle Hymn of the Republic.")

From age to age they gather, all the brave of heart and strong,
In the strife of truth with error, of the right against the wrong; [1]
I can see their gleaming banner, I can hear their triumph song,
The truth is marching on!

REFRAIN

Glory, glory, hallelujah,
Glory, glory, hallelujah, [2]
Glory, glory, hallelujah,
The truth is marching on.

" In this sign [3] we conquer "—'tis the symbol of our faith;
Made holy by the might of love [4] triumphant over death;
" He finds his life who loseth it," [5] forevermore it saith;
The right is marching on! [6]—Refrain.

The earth is circling [7] onward out of shadow into light;
The stars [8] keep watch above our way, however dark the night;
For every martyr's stripe there glows a bar of morning bright; [9]
And Love is marching on!—Refrain.

[1] Girls enter, Cross-bearer leading, form in semicircle in center of platform, timing march so as to be in position by time stanza is ended.
[2] Look upward, expressing joy.
[3] Cross-bearer lifts cross high, all gather about it, gazing at it.
[4] Lift arms in gesture of triumph.
[5] Head and eyes downward.
[6] Heads lifted—expression of confidence.
[7] Move hands in widening circles.
[8] Look up.
[9] Hands high above heads, wide apart.

Lead on,[10] O Cross of martyr faith, with thee is victory;
Shine forth,[11] O stars and reddening dawn, the full day yet shall be;
On earth his kingdom cometh,[12] and with joy [13] our eyes shall see
Our God is marching on! [14]

VOICE (*from behind scenes, immediately at end of song*): According as each hath received a gift, ministering it as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

For the overseer must be blameless as God's steward.

Render the account of thy stewardship.

(*Enter, during* VOICE, *the* SPIRIT OF THE DENOMINATION, *a young woman in white, with blue girdle and scarf, carrying staff, as though on pilgrimage. She listens earnestly to the* VOICE.)

THE SPIRIT OF THE DENOMINATION: I have heard a Voice, as it were the Voice of God, and it bringeth unto me a great challenge. "As each hath received a gift"—yea, all that I am, and all that I have as the Spirit of the great Denomination of Baptists, have I received. Naught is of my own making; it is all from the hand of God, a gift of his wonderful grace.

"Ministering it"—ah, that soundeth indeed like unto the word of him who said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

"As good stewards"—blameless—as God's steward.

"Render the account of thy stewardship." I must needs remember that all my time, my talents, my money, yea, my very life itself, is mine only as God's steward.

Not my own, these gifts and blessings;
Not my own to hoard away;
Mine—as steward of his bounty,
Mine—to render back some day.

Far and wide my Baptist host are scattered, in city and village and town, throughout a vast continent stretcheth the bands of our fellowship. I represent millions of Baptists, and the Voice hath

[10] Cross-bearer steps to front, others form V, with cross at apex. Cross high.
[11] Arms outstretched to cross.
[12] Arms spread out to indicate world.
[13] All kneel, arms stretched toward cross.
[14] Arms raised, heads thrown back, attitude of prayer. All join in refrain—marching off as they sing, cross leading.

called us stewards. Are we "blameless stewards"? I wonder! How can I be a steward in very truth? Who can help me?

(*Enter, from left, young woman in long, flowing white gown, carrying a large hour-glass. She represents* THE STEWARDSHIP OF TIME.)

THE STEWARD OF TIME (*to* THE SPIRIT OF THE DENOMINATION):

The Steward of Time am I—
God's generous gift to thee.
Thy moments and hours and days,
He gives abundant and free.

(*Holding up hour-glass, watches falling sands in silence a moment.*)

The sands are steadily falling—
The moments pass swiftly by;
To hours and to days they lengthen;
So fleet and so fast they fly.

Oh, Spirit of Christ's own followers,
Thy *time* is a gift Divine.
So use it that light of thy Saviour
Throughout all the world may shine.

Then fill all the fleeting moments
With deeds of joy and of love,
Till the world shall echo his praises
Like the choirs of heaven above.

(*Steps to back of platform and remains standing during rest of scene. Enter, from right, young woman in college cap and gown, holding diploma in her hand. She represents* THE STEWARDSHIP OF TALENTS.)

THE STEWARD OF TALENTS: Oh, Spirit of the Baptists, at the command of the Master of men am I come to thee. I am the Steward of Talents. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all.

Among the hundreds of thousands of thy people, O Spirit, there are many and varied talents. Some have been given the gift of song, so that they might lift the souls of men on the wings of harmony into the presence of God himself. Some have the gift of eloquent speech, that they may stir the hearts of men to new endeavor and achievement. Some have the power of teaching, that they may lead the childhood and youth of the world to the arms of the Saviour who " set the child in the midst."

Go bid thy people all remember whence came these talents of beauty and of power, and that it is God who worketh all things in all. Bid them remember that they have not created these talents, that they are merely stewards of this manifold grace of God. Bid them guard them carefully, develop them wisely, use them unselfishly, and render account of them even as *faithful* stewards.

(*Steps back beside* STEWARD OF TIME.)

(*Enter, from left, young woman in yellow gown, wearing gold bracelets and beads, hair bound with gold ribbon, and with a string of five-dollar bills hung about her neck and hanging down below her waist. She represents* THE STEWARDSHIP OF MONEY.)

THE STEWARD OF MONEY:

As Steward of Money I come to thee,
O Spirit so bright and fair;
To bring to thee the word of thy Lord—
His message with thee to share.

" The silver is mine and the gold is mine;
The cattle on all the hills:
All that man hath is my gift to him;
My glory the whole earth fills.

" But often my servants forget this word,
And take as their own my gold,
Forgetting that all are but stewards here: "
Thus sadly the tale is told.

'Tis thus that the Master speaketh to thee,
O Spirit of Baptists fair;
He bids thee bring of thy wealth so great,
And lay at his altar there.

(*Motions to left where little child is waiting; child enters, also dressed in yellow, but with no bracelets or beads. She holds one bill, one-tenth of amount in string of bills on* THE STEWARD OF MONEY, *in her hands, holding it high in display as* STEWARD *speaks next three stanzas.*)

Oh, see! "At least a *tenth*" of thy wealth—
'Tis a portion so very small
To render in thankfulness unto him
Who giveth to thee thine *all.*

So summon thy people to bring their gifts
That his message *all* may know;
That all of earth's tribes may learn his love,
And his power to save from woe.

Oh, tell out the message far and wide,
And bring ye the whole tithe in,
That blessings abundant may come from him,
And the world be saved from sin.

(*Steps back beside other* STEWARDS, *drawing the child with her and stands with her arm over child's shoulder.*)

(*Enter from side aisle* THE COMRADES OF SERVICE, *a group of ten to thirty young people in ordinary costume, leader carrying large Christian flag. They march to the platform, singing, "The Whole Wide World for Jesus," and surround* THE SPIRIT OF THE DENOMINATION.)

THE COMRADES OF SERVICE (*singing as they march*):

THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD FOR JESUS

(By J. D. Hammond, from "Living Hymns")

The whole wide world for Jesus,
This shall our watchword be;
Upon the highest mountain,
Down by the widest sea;
The whole wide world for Jesus!
To him shall all men bow,
In city or on prairie—
The world for Jesus now!

The whole wide world for Jesus!
The marching order sound:
Go ye and preach the gospel
Wherever man is found.
The whole wide world for Jesus!
Ride forth, O conquering King,
Through all the mighty nations
The world to glory bring!

LEADER OF COMRADES (*to* SPIRIT): We are the Stewards of Life, the Comrades of Service. Young, strong, courageous, we have seen the vision splendid of needy ones crying in their darkness, "Come over and help us," of hungry souls asking for the Bread of Life. We realize that our lives are not our own, that we are bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ; and we desire to be true stewards of these lives God has trusted us with. We know that there are needy fields of service, discouraging tasks, difficult places of work. But we are not afraid. Our time, our talents, our training, our ability, our lives, are our Master's to use them as he wills.

(THE CROSS-BEARER—*from the pantomime at beginning of scene —enters quietly during this speech, carrying cross concealed. She takes position at center of platform rear, above the* STEWARDS. *As speech is concluded, she lifts the cross high and holds it during closing song by* COMRADES OF SERVICE. *Spot light on cross.*)

THE COMRADES OF SERVICE (*kneeling, with faces toward the cross and arms outstretched toward it, sing softly, to tune of Woodworth*):

Just as we are, thine own to be
In service true and glad and free,
O Master, Lord, we come to thee;
Accept and use us, Lord, we pray.

As messengers of thine we'll go
To lands that lie in sin and woe;
O use us, Lord, our strength, our all:
We wait thy blessing and thy call.

VOICE (*from behind scenes*): I have chosen you and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide.

2. THE SPREADING OF THE LIGHT

Groping for the Light

(*With the platform lighted only with a very dim blue or gray light, a group of young people, eight men and eight women, in the costumes of Burma, Assam, India, China, Japan, the Philippines, Africa, and Europe—Poland—enter, groping their way, to illustrate in pantomime the words of the following solo as it is sung by a concealed singer.*)

Solo (*Tune, "St. Christopher," "Beneath the Cross of Jesus"*) :

Beneath their load of sadness,[1]
The nations press their way;
They grope in woe and blindness [2]
Toward light of dawning day.
Through centuries of darkness [3]
They long have sought for light:
They die without thy guidance,[4]
O Church of Christ so bright!

Beneath their weight of darkness,[5]
Their hands appeal to thee,
O Church of Christ the Saviour;
They long thy joy to see!
In all thy light and glory,[6]
In all thy joy and peace,
O think of these thy brothers,[7]
And give them quick release.

[1] Enter with heads bowed and hands clasped in front.

[2] Very slowly grope across platform toward hint of light high up.

[3] Sink down in despair.

[4] Bury heads in hands.

[5] Spirit of the Denomination enters, from opposite side—stands looking at the Nations, who look up, one after another, perceive her and stretch out hands in appeal.

[6] Amber spot light on Spirit.

[7] Nations hold pose of appeal to end of stanza.

Lead to the Cross of Jesus [8]
These burdened souls and sad,
That they may see his glory,
And seeing, be made glad.
The Cross is shining o'er thee;
Then glory in its light; [9]
Till all the world shall know him,[10]
And faith be lost in sight!

SPIRIT OF THE DENOMINATION (*stepping to front of platform, center*):

The circle of Light has grown wider;
It is reaching around the world;
Its rays of glory are spreading,
And sin from its throne shall be hurled.
That glad day of Triumph is coming,
When Light Divine shall be known
In every stronghold of darkness,
And evil and fear have flown!

Then come, O thou Church Triumphant,
Sing forth his triumph song,
The song of thy Master and Saviour;
Come, sing it with gladness strong.
O sing, for the nations are waiting,
Waiting thy coming glad—
Waiting to share thy rich blessing—
Waiting, in wond'ring, sad.

O sing of the Light of his glory!
Of triumph both sure and divine!
Of victory o'er sin and o'er evil,
When Light everlasting shall shine!

(*As* THE SPIRIT OF THE DENOMINATION *finishes this appeal, and stands with outstretched arms, two groups of young people start from the rear of auditorium, down main aisles, singing antiphonally, "The Light of the World Is Jesus," by P. P. Bliss.*

[8] Electric lighted cross over platform at one side, concealed till now, is suddenly lighted. SPIRIT goes to NATIONS and leads them to the cross, where all kneel.

[9] All rise, lifting arms to cross.

[10] All turn to audience extending arms in gesture suggesting "all the world." At last line, all look up.

Each one carries a lighted candle.[11] *They march to platform, surrounding* THE SPIRIT OF THE DENOMINATION *and* NATIONS.)

GROUP ONE

The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin,

Like sunshine at noonday his glory shone in,

GROUP TWO

The Light of the World is Jesus.
(*Candles lifted high.*)
The Light of the World is Jesus.

CHORUS (*Both Groups*)

Come to the Light, 'tis shining for thee,
Sweetly the Light has dawned upon me;
Once I was blind, but now I can see,
The Light of the world is Jesus!

No darkness have we who in Jesus abide,

The Light of the World is Jesus.

We walk in the light when we follow our guide,

The Light of the World is Jesus.

No need of the sunlight in heaven, we're told,

The Light of the World is Jesus.

The Lamb is the light in the city of Gold,

The Light of the World is Jesus.

CHORUS

(*Both groups, the* SPIRIT *and the* NATIONS)

Come to the Light, 'tis shining for thee,
Sweetly the Light has dawned upon me;
Once I was blind, but now I can see,
The Light of the world is Jesus![12]

THE SPIRIT OF THE DENOMINATION (*stepping forward, appealing to audience*):

[11] If, for any reason, the use of candles is impracticable, strong electric flash-lights wrapped in white tissue-paper will make very acceptable substitutes.

[12] A striking and climactic effect may be obtained by changing the final note of the last chorus from low *f* to high *f* for the sopranos. All candles, or flash-lights, should be lifted high above the heads each time the words "The Light of the World is Jesus" are sung.

O Youth of the Christian forces,
Your faces with dawning bright,
Go, spread the Light of his glory,
Wherever still rules the night.
Go to village and city and nation,
Uplifting the Gospel Light;
Go, spread it to all earth's peoples,
Till groping be lost in sight.

Oh watch, as the Glory-light broadens,[13]
From hand to hand see it go!
Held high as a beckoning beacon
To banish darkness and woe.
Shall loads of all nations be lifted,
And all the dark paths made bright?
Shall forces of evil be vanquished
By the dawning of the Light?

'Tis only when *you* as Light-bearers,
Shall carry the message bright,
To those who in darkness are groping,
That dawn shall replace the night.
They wait—the burdened of all earth's nations—
With their hands outstretched to you.
They are pleading for more Light-bearers—
To the Challenge will *you* be true?

What answer to Christ will you render,
As Light from the Cross shines out[14]
With its message of dedication
To banish sin and doubt?
He waits[15]—at your heart's door knocking—
Will you dedicate now your all?
Will you go wherever he sends you?
Will you answer "Yes" to his call?

[13] Front row of those on platform lean over (or go down) and light candles held by those in front seats. At words "held high," all on platform and in front seats hold candles high.

[14] At words "light from the cross," electric-lighted cross is turned on.

[15] At words "He waits," stereopticon picture of "The Light of the World," by Holman Hunt, is thrown on screen. Screen should be hung at extreme rear of platform under the cross. Lights of cross should fade out, and stereopticon picture gradually grow brighter as SPIRIT OF THE DENOMINATION gestures toward it. All on platform and in front row, with the exception of SPIRIT, should kneel as the cross lights are turned on, and remain kneeling during the singing of first stanza of following hymn. All should face the cross and the picture. They should rise at the first words of the chorus and turn to audience.

THE SPIRIT OF THE DENOMINATION AND ALL PARTICIPANTS (*sing very softly, unaccompanied, unless echo organ effect is possible*):

I'LL GO WHERE YOU WANT ME TO GO

(By Mary Brown)

It may not be on the mountain's height,
Or over the stormy sea;
It may not be at the battle's front,
My Lord will have need of me.
But if, by a still small voice, he calls
To paths that I do not know,
I'll answer, dear Lord, with my hand in thine,
I'll go where you want me to go.

CHORUS (*Audience joining*)

I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord,
Over mountain, or plain, or sea,
I'll say what you want me to say, dear Lord,
I'll be what you want me to be.

Prayer and Benediction.

XI

PAGEANTS FOR SPECIAL DAYS

1. A FESTIVAL OF LIGHT

A CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Outline

Prologue. A Pantomime, illustrating the solo, "Groping in the Night."

Episode I. The Promise of the Light. Isaiah and His Disciples.

Choir and Isaiah. "Watchman, Tell Us of the Night."

Episode II. The Coming of the Light.

Scene 1. The Angels and the Shepherds.

Scene 2. The Magi and Their Tributes.

Scene 3. The Musing Mother.

Episode III. The Triumph of the Light.

Scene 1. Amid the Lowly.

Scene 2. Among the Favored.

Scene 3. The Star Maidens.

Epilogue. The Banishment of Darkness.

Processional. "The Light of the World Is Jesus."

Prologue

GROPING IN THE NIGHT

Solo, or Duet (*tune, "The Shadows of the Evening," St. Leonard; "Hymnal for American Youth," No. 21*):

Through ages long and dark and drear
  Mankind has groped for light;
Neath skies that held no touch of cheer—
  Nor sun nor star shone bright.
Yet still they sought an upward way,
  Still sought for light divine,
Still prayed that soon might break the day,
  The full, bright day might shine.

Sometimes 'neath weight of sad despair
They sank beneath their woe—
Sometimes they caught sweet glimpses fair
Of triumph o'er their foe.
But, somehow, light seemed beckoning on;
They followed, groping e'er,
Until for them the night was done—
The heav'nly morn dawned fair.

Though faint they saw the gleam of light,
They faced its beck'ning ray;
They followed, till the sky grew bright
With beams of dawning day.
Grant us, O Lord, like them, the grace,
To follow e'er that light:
Till we, like them, shall see thy face,
With radiant glory bright.

Pantomime Directions

Platform lighted only by a very dim blue or gray light, just enough light for forms of participants to be distinguished. Singers concealed behind the scenes or in adjoining room.

Participants: Four girls in flowing robes of dark color, gray preferred, each carrying long staff to suggest pilgrimage.

As singers sing Stanza One, second line, girls enter, very slowly, groping their way; third line, look up; fourth, shake heads in despair; fifth, gestures as though toward "upward way"; sixth, hold gesture, looking inquiringly at each other; seventh, kneel in prayer; eighth, remain kneeling.

Stanza two, first line, hands clasped over staff, heads bowed; second, slowly sink to floor, heads bowed on arm; third, quickly look up as in surprise; fourth, rise, stand in attitude of triumph; fifth, gesture toward distant beam of light (electric flash on for an instant); sixth, move, slowly, gropingly, in direction of flash of light; seventh and eighth, continue slow movement to edge of platform, looking up at increasing beam of light on ceiling (flashlight or second stereopticon will do this).

Stanza three, first line, back in center of platform, girls watch glimmer of light, which seems to move slightly, as though beckoning them to follow; second, gesture to each other as though ques-

tioning whether they should follow; third, move toward light, which grows brighter, as in previous stanza; fourth, light on platform changes from blue or gray to pink and then to amber, suggesting dawn; fifth and sixth, kneel in prayer; seventh, rise, gesture toward stereopticon screen in background, until words, "See thy face," when picture of Hofmann's "Head of Christ" is thrown on screen; picture is held on screen during last line; eighth, girls leave platform very quietly, gazing at picture on screen as they go.

EPISODE I

THE PROMISE OF THE LIGHT

Setting: A corner of the Court of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Time: The eighth century B. C. Platform bare, dark curtain background.

Characters: Isaiah the Prophet and a Group of his Disciples. Group may be any number from three to six.

(ISAIAH *enters at left, goes to right of platform, and stands with folded arms during conversation of* FIRST, SECOND, *and* THIRD DISCIPLES. *When he speaks all gather eagerly around him.*)

FIRST DISCIPLE (*to rest of* GROUP OF DISCIPLES): Verily, my brethren, we have fallen upon evil times! Have ye observed how the Assyrian triumphs? He is invading our land, and it seemeth that he will speedily come even unto this city of Jerusalem and lay it waste and desolate!

SECOND DISCIPLE: Yea, in truth, thou hast well spoken! It verily seemeth that Jehovah hath forgotten his inheritance and cast off his people!

THIRD DISCIPLE: But might it not be true that Jehovah is putting his people to the test? That perchance this darkness of despair which seemeth to be settling down upon us, is but our yielding to the temptations of the Evil One? May it not be that Jehovah hath yet a promise of deliverance and blessing for his chosen people? Shall we not seek the counsel of our great teacher, Isaiah, the Prophet, lest we bow down in the darkness of despair?

ALL: Yea, let us seek the Prophet!

ISAIAH: Well do ye seek the counsel of the Lord in a day of darkness and despair. Far better than that ye sit down and mourn and lament. Lift up your eyes, and behold the promised light of Jehovah! His light shall come, and the darkness shall not prevail against it.

Ask ye a sign of Jehovah thy God? Jehovah shall give thee a sign.

Behold a virgin shall conceive and shall bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

O house of Jacob, come ye, let us walk in the light of Jehovah.

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased their joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken as in the day of Midian. For all the armor of the armed man in the tumult, and garments rolled in blood, shall be for burning, for fuel of fire. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this.

And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah. And his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears, but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth: and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek; and his resting-place shall be glorious.

Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. He will not cry, nor lift up his voice, nor cause it to be heard in the street. A bruised reed will he not break, and a dimly burning wick will he not quench: he will bring forth justice in truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set justice in the earth; and the aisles shall wait for his law.

Yea, he saith, it is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth.

Arise, shine: for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the peoples, but Jehovah will arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. The sun shall no more be thy light by day: neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but Jehovah will be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

CHOIR AND ISAIAH *sing "Watchman, Tell Us of the Night."*

EPISODE II

THE COMING OF THE LIGHT

SCENE 1. THE ANGELS AND THE SHEPHERDS

Setting: A hillside near Bethlehem—a winter night, group of shepherds gathered around a fire.

Characters: Three (or more) Shepherds; four (or more) Angels.

REUBEN (*Chief Shepherd*): The wind is chill tonight, my brothers. Gather ye close around our fire. Somehow my heart is sad tonight as I think of our nation and how the chill winds of adversity seem to be blowing continually upon us. The old-time prophecies of future glory and triumph for our people seem very far from fulfilment. Alas, alas! It seemeth that Jehovah hath forgotten his people and cast off his inheritance.

JACOB: Wherefore art thou cast down, and why art thou disquieted, my brother? Doth not the God of Israel still live, and hath he not promised deliverance to his people? Why should ye be discouraged and sad as those who have no hope?

REUBEN: But see, my brothers, how the forces of Rome have their triumph and how even now the edict of Cæsar Augustus hath caused all Israel to be enrolled, doubtless for further and more exorbitant taxation. (*Bitterly.*) Yea, it is indeed a disgrace for the children of Israel to be obliged to journey from their homes to the cities of their fathers at the command of an emperor of a foreign land!

BENJAMIN: Yea, our brother Reuben is right; the star of Israel's glory hath set, and henceforth there remaineth only the deepening darkness for the sons of Jacob. Alas, alas, that we could not have lived in the days of Israel's glory when our great King David sat upon the throne and made this a mighty kingdom!

JACOB: But oh, my brothers, have there not been hours of darkness in former days of Israel's history? Dost thou forget how the Assyrian came into the land in the days of Isaiah the Prophet, and how he even laid siege to the city of Jerusalem? And how mightily Jehovah delivered the city and punished the Assyrian? Yea, and how he promised, through Isaiah the Prophet, the coming of the Messiah who should banish the darkness and reign in light and love?

REUBEN: Yea, well do we remember that prophecy, for were we not taught it in our earliest days; and has it not been for these many centuries the one hope of Israel? (*Sadly.*) But, alas, the days of miracles are over, and naught but a miracle of marvelous power could bring about the overthrow of Rome and the deliverance of our people. Nay, Jacob, Jehovah hath in very truth forgotten us and left us to grope in the darkness of the dense clouds of his displeasure.

(SHEPHERDS *sit in silence for a time, with heads bowed on their arms. Light begins to show in sky at right, rear.*)

JACOB (*looking up, discovers the light*): Look, my brothers! See, what meaneth yonder light? It seemeth to move and groweth brighter. What can it be?

REUBEN (*in terror*) : It is the light of the glory of Jehovah! He is coming in power to punish us for our sins! (*Hiding his face in his mantle.*) Let us hide our faces from the brightness of his appearing!

BENJAMIN: Hark! I hear the sound of distant music. What can it mean?

ANGELS (*behind the scenes or in adjoining room, sing*) :

Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.

(*See any Christmas anthem collection.*)

(*Or*) Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!
—*From "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing," Wesley.*

(ANGELS *appear, at right, rear, slightly elevated above level of platform where* SHEPHERDS *are. Hold position during speech of* ANGEL OF THE LORD.)

ANGEL OF THE LORD (*advancing toward* SHEPHERDS, *who crouch as though in terror*) :

Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

And this is the sign unto you: ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.

(ANGEL *steps back to other* ANGELS *and joins with them in repeating song, "Glory to God in the Highest," at close of which light fades away from* ANGELS *and centers on* SHEPHERDS, *who have remained in attitude of worship during last singing.*)

JACOB: Blessed by Jehovah, who hath kept these things from the wise and prudent and hath revealed them unto us, though we be as babes in our knowledge of his ways. The time of the deliverance of Israel hath dawned, my brothers. Blessed be Jehovah! Let us go now even unto Bethlehem and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

BENJAMIN AND REUBEN (*together*) : Yea, let us go with haste.

(*In the dark, as soon as* SHEPHERDS *have gone, screen at left of platform is removed, disclosing* MARY *seated behind a manger in which is located a strong electric light, to suggest the presence of the Babe in the manger. As soon as screen is removed, light in manger is turned on.* JOSEPH *is standing behind* MARY *with his hand on her shoulder, bending over the manger.*)

SINGER (*hidden in adjoining room sings*) :

HOLY NIGHT! PEACEFUL NIGHT!

(*Translated from Joseph Mohr.*)

Holy night, peaceful night
All is dark, save the light
Yonder where they sweet vigil keep
O'er the Babe, who in silent sleep
Rests in heavenly peace,
Rests in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holiest night,
Darkness flies, all is light,
Shepherds hear the Angels sing:
" Allelulia! hail the King!
Christ the Saviour is here,
Christ the Saviour is here."

Silent night, holiest night,
Guiding star, lend thy light.
See the Eastern Wise-men bring
Gifts and homage to our King,
Christ the Saviour is here,
Jesus the Saviour is here.

(*Enter* SHEPHERDS, JOSEPH *goes to meet them.*)

JACOB: Sir, we have heard a marvelous song of angels, singing of glory to God in the highest, and of peace on earth. We have heard an angel's voice, telling us that there is born to us today in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord, and that we should find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And we have come with haste to find him.

JOSEPH (*with gravity*) : The Babe whom ye seek is here. Verily, Jehovah is mindful of his Covenant! Enter my brethren.

(SHEPHERDS *approach the manger;* MARY *greets them with a smile. They approach in awe, and kneel in silence around the manger. Soft music, such as Luther's "Cradle Hymn," played while they kneel.*)

REUBEN (*standing in attitude of prayer*): O Lord, I beseech thee, have mercy on thy servant for daring to doubt thy word. Thou art indeed a covenant-keeping God, and thy word is Yea and Amen unto thy servants. I praise thee that thou hast permitted thy servant, in spite of his lack of faith, to behold the dawning of thy light. I thank thee, O God of Israel, that thou hast sent unto us the Saviour who is Christ the Lord, who shall lead us out of the bondage of darkness into the marvelous light of thy love. Amen.

(SHEPHERDS *go out, gazing as they go, into the manger. As soon as the* SHEPHERDS *have gone, singer in adjoining room starts following solo. When she reaches the fourth line, star directly over the manger is turned on. The chorus is sung by the* THREE WISE-MEN *as they enter, going directly to the manger, kneeling around it as the* SHEPHERDS *have done. The star over manger should be so arranged that its light shines down upon the manger and illumines the platform. No other light except that of star and manger light is used in this scene.*)

SCENE 2. THE MAGI

SOLO (*behind scenes*):

There's a beautiful star, a beautiful star,
That weary trav'lers have followed afar:
Shining so brightly all the way,
Till it stood o'er the place where the young Child lay.

TRIO OF WISE-MEN (*entering, sing in chorus*):

Star, star, beautiful star;
Pilgrims weary we are;
To Jesus, to Jesus,
We follow thee from afar.

SOLO:

In the land of the East in the shadows of night,
We saw the glory of thy new light;
Telling to us in our distant home,
The Lord, our Redeemer, to earth had come.

TRIO (*as they kneel around manger*) :

Star, star, beautiful star;
Pilgrims weary we are;
To Jesus, to Jesus,
We follow thee from afar.

FIRST WISE-MAN (*rising, presenting his gift*) : To this Child, Jesus, I bring my gift of gold. In our far-away Eastern home we saw the star and followed its guidance, knowing that it would lead us to the King. To him who is born King of the Jews, and not of the Jews merely, but of all mankind, we of the East render homage and pay our tribute. Even as this gold which I bring is the most precious of metals, so would we bring to him all that is most precious to us, as that homage which is but his due, " Whose right it is to reign."

SECOND WISE-MAN (*rising, presenting his gift*) : I, too, have brought from far my gift to the Child, Jesus. In this urn is the most fragrant of frankincense, my gift to him who is the true Priest of God, annointed of God, to reveal to all mankind the way of approach unto God. As the fragrance of my frankincense quietly stealeth out into the room, until all are aware of its presence, so shall the influence of his life quietly pervade this land and all lands until mankind shall know him as their true and only Priest of God, revealing God to all men everywhere.

THIRD WISE-MAN (*rising, presenting his gift*) : My gift to the Infant King is this jar of myrrh, which speaketh, perchance, of sadness and of sorrow. I bring it to the Man, Christ Jesus, who shall save his people from their sins, through the sacrifice of himself. If he would reveal God to men, he must be in truth both God and man. He must needs enter all the experiences of mankind, sharing with them their joys and their sorrows as well. Thus I bring my myrrh to One who is to be not only a King, reigning in the hearts of men everywhere, and a Priest, revealing to all men the true way to God, but also a man among men, sharing the common experiences of the life of mankind, going about among them, a " man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

(WISE-MEN *leave gifts in hands of* MARY *and exeunt slowly.*)

SCENE 3. THE MUSING MOTHER

MARY (*alone*):

My soul doth magnify the lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour:
For he hath looked upon the low estate of his handmaid:
For he that is mighty hath done to me great things:
And holy is his name.
He hath showed strength with his arm;
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their heart.
He hath put down princes from their thrones,
And hath exalted them of low degree.
He hath given help to Israel his servant.
That he might remember mercy
(As he spake unto our fathers)
Toward Abraham and his seed forever.

"Gold for a King"—ah, yea, in thy veins, my Baby Jesus, floweth the blood of the King of Israel, yea, thou art a true descendant of our greatest King, even David, and, though our home be in a far-away Nazareth thou wert born here in the very City of David, so wonderfully hath God led us.

"Frankincense for a Priest"—yea, in very truth doth Israel need a faithful Priest, who shall show men the true and right way to God. Alas, so many of the priests of our people minister but for gain, or for position or pride. What was it that Chief Shepherd said as he prayed? Ah, he spoke of this Baby Jesus as a Saviour who would lead out of the bondage of darkness into the marvelous light of God's love. Oh, what a glory for you, Baby mine!

But "myrrh"! What did that Wise-man mean? He spoke of "a man of sorrows." Oh, my heart grows cold with the terror of the thought! My Baby Jesus, suffering, dying, perhaps in shame! I cannot bear the thought! Yet, his name is Jesus, for "He shall save his people from their sins." Perhaps it may be the will of God that he shall be "made perfect through suffering," and that I, his mother, shall learn complete obedience only through sorrow. Truly, the world is dark and it hath need of light, but the Light must struggle against the darkness if it would conquer. But it will conquer, of that I am certain in my soul, and perchance in some way

that I know not of, my Baby Jesus, mine own little one shall somehow, some day, become the Light of all the world!

(*Curtain.*)

Choir and Congregation join in singing "Adeste Fideles" ("Oh Come, All Ye Faithful").

EPISODE III

THE TRIUMPH OF LIGHT

Scene 1. Amid the Lowly

Setting: Suggestion of Negro cabin on a Southern plantation in the days before the Civil War. Some loose cotton scattered about, suggesting nearness of cotton-fields.

Characters: "Mandy," an old Negro mammy, fat, jovial, and happy in spite of her condition as a slave. "Tom," old Negro man, bent over with long days of toil in the cotton-fields. Both are clothed in garments which suggest extreme poverty.

Lighting: Pink flood deepening to red, and then to blue to suggest sunset.

(Mandy *is seated on a bench just outside the cabin door, wiping her hands on her apron as though she has just finished some piece of work in the cabin. Enter* Tom, *wearily, carrying hoe over his shoulder.*)

Mandy: Well, ef here ain't ole man Tom! I'se shore right peart glad to see yer, Tom. Thought mos' likely as how you'd be a-comin' long 'bout now, seein' de sun's a getting low in de west there. Come long, ole man, set down on de bench side o' Mandy an' rest yer weary bones. Pears like you-all kinda weary tonight.

Tom (*sinking down on the bench in utter weariness*): Pears like you-all done size up de situation jes right, Mandy. Yer ole man shore is plumb tired out this night. Seems lak dat overseer got de longes' lash and de cuttines' tongue ob any overseer eber I did see. De sun were mighty hot in de cotton-fields all day long, Mandy, an' dis nigger's gettin' pretty old for hoein' in de cotton fields all de livelong day, Mandy. Ole Marse uster care somethin' bout us niggers once on a time, Mandy; you mind them days, how he an'

ole Missus uster even come down by de cabins sometimes, an' ask us how we wuz gettin' along. But now—laws-a-massy, young Marse jus interested in making money an' don't care nothin' 'tall bout folks; jus hires them overseers with their long lashes to drive us poor niggers to work like we wuz cattle. I tell yer, Mandy, it don't just seem right, somehow. Pears like to me dat de Lawd done forgot all 'bout us poor black folks down here in de cotton-fields, an' lef' us to grope our way long in de darkness. See, Mandy, de sun has set, and see how dark it's gettin'! I kinda feel like it's dat same way in my life, dere ain't not'in' but darkness and de shadder of death ahead of us. De good Lawd's done got so busy with de white folks dat he ain't got no time left to bother wid us pore niggers, and maybe he's give the job to some o' his angels to tend ter, an' dey jest natcherally done gone forgot all 'bout it. Might's well give up trying, Mandy, can't see de way out, no how!

MANDY (*cheerily*) : How ye done talk, Uncle Tom! Must shore 'nough been a hard day in de field. Yes, Tom, you wuz right, it wuz a sight diff'rent when ole Marse Jack wuz alive. This young fry done bent on makin' money all time, never mind nothin' 'bout de folk dey uses up makin' it. As though money wuz more 'count than folks! But neber you mind, ole Tom, even if 'tis a bit dark jus' now; has you done forgot dat de moon done scheduled to climb up outen de swamp pretty soon an' lighten up de whole face o' de earth? Cours' it's dark when de sun sets, why wouldn't it be? But pretty soon de moon done gwine to rise, and den it be all light again. And den bimeby up will come de sun again, smilin' jus' bright as ever, and de night 'ill all be gone!

An', Tom, didn't you know dat it's jus' de same way in yer heart as it is in de sky ef yer'll only let it be so? Dere don't never need to be no time when it's *all* dark; maybe sometimes de sun kinda seems to set for a little while, but den long comes some little bit o' light to light de way, an' jus' hold yer steady till de sun comes up again.

An', Tom, I guess you done forgot what de Good Book done tell us 'bout dat glorious country where dey don't need no light o' de sun, nor o' de moon, fer de Lamb's de light thereof!

Listen, Tom, don't you hear dem darkies down yonder a-singin' dat grand ole song.

(*Hidden quartet sings, in Negro dialect, first two lines of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot, Comin' fer to Carry Me Home."*)

Come long, now, (*rising*) old man Tom, jus' jine in, sing it long o' me, an' all de dark will fade away an' de glory light will shorely shine for you an' me!

(MANDY *and* TOM *sing entire song, "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." Hidden quartet repeats last line, very softly, as an echo.*)

TOM (*dropping on his knees in prayer*): O blessed Lord, you didn't forget 'bout us poor niggers after all, did you? And you are sendin' de light to all de folks in de darkness. Oh, bless your glorious Name, I thank you for de light!

CHOIR: "There's a Light Upon the Mountains" (by H. Burton, from "*Hymnal for American Youth*").

SCENE 2. AMONG THE FAVORED

Setting: The living-room of a wealthy home on Christmas morning. Bookcases and splendidly bound books on table indicating culture as well as wealth.

Characters: Mr. Busyman, a prosperous business man; Mrs. Busyman, whose middle name is Society; Miss Flutterby Busyman, the young lady daughter of the family; and Mr. Go-as-you-Please Busyman, the son of the family, a sophomore in college.

(*Enter* MRS. BUSYMAN, *looks room over critically.*)

MRS. BUSYMAN: Well, the house looks fairly respectable for Christmas Day. I see the maids have hung the Christmas wreaths as I ordered. The flowers haven't come yet, but there is plenty of time for them. Oh, dear, these holidays do take such a lot of one's time, I wish they didn't come so often.

(*Enter* GO-AS-YOU-PLEASE, *in time to overhear last remark.*)

GO-AS-YOU-PLEASE: What's that, mother, did I catch you wishing that these holidays wouldn't come so often? Why, what's the matter with Christmas? Seems to me that it's kind of a jolly sort of a time. Only difficulty I find with it is that beastly custom which makes us give a lot of useless presents to a lot of folks you don't care anything about. Senseless idea, anyway; wonder who invented

it? Of course, mother, I wasn't referring to you and dad and sister. I've scoured all the stores in College-town to find something for you folks. And I've got some surprises for you, I assure you.

(*Enter* MR. BUSYMAN *and* MISS FLUTTERBY.)

MR. BUSYMAN (*hurriedly looking at his watch*): Well, well, good morning, everybody. I suppose the proper thing is to wish everybody a Merry Christmas. (*Looking around the room.*) Well, we do look pretty Christmasy here, that's a fact. But I suppose we ought to get busy right away with that matter of Christmas gifts. I've got an appointment in a half hour, and we must get this Christmas business disposed of right away. (*Puts hand in pocket, draws out jewel-case.*) Here you are, Mrs. Society, here's something you might like to wear at Mrs. Thing-um-bob's reception next week. And here, Miss Flutterby, here's a little trinket for you in the shape of a string of pearls. (*Aside.*) Pretty good value they are, but they did cost a pretty penny.

And for you, young Go-as-you-Please, here's an order on the local branch of the Pierce-Arrow people for a car. Any kind you want. Got tired of having you tease me every time you come home to let you take the family car back to college with you, so concluded that you might as well have one of your own. See that you take some decent care of it, now. You'll have to care for the running expenses of it out of your allowance.

THE THREE (*in concert*): Thank you very much. This is *such* a surprise! Just what I wanted. How did you guess?

MR. BUSYMAN: How did I guess? Well, it seems to me I've heard some rather broad hints around here lately. Well, now that's over, guess I'll have to be getting off.

MISS FLUTTERBY: What, dad, can't you even give your family even part of Christmas Day? Let the old business engagement go and stay with us today, like you used to when we were little. Please!

GO-AS-YOU-PLEASE: Great idea, Flutterby. Come on, dad, be a sport, cut out the business for part of the day at least, and stay for the Christmas dinner anyhow.

MRS. BUSYMAN (*wistfully*): Christmas used to be such a happy day when the children were little. You used to stay home all day, and we had such good times together. Can't you stay, Robert?

MR. BUSYMAN: I didn't know I was so popular with my family. It surely is a long time since we had a real day together, isn't it? Tell you what I'll do, folks; if you young fry will cut out parties for today, I'll cut out business, and we'll make a day of it right here at home. What do you say?

BOTH YOUNG PEOPLE: Sure we'll do it. Good thing to get acquainted over again.

MR. BUSYMAN (*picking up envelope from table*) : Hello, what's this? Why, here's something from my old friend Jim Smith. Used to know him in college long time ago. Seems to me he wasted his talents by going into the ministry and taking a little pastorate in some country town somewhere. I believe he's stayed right there ever since he left the seminary. Wonder what he's sending *me?* Oh, it's just a card. But it's rather pretty, isn't it? (*Holds it up for inspection.*) Let's see what it says. (*Reads.*)

" There is a better thing than the observance of Christmas, and that is keeping Christmas.

" Are you willing to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world—stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death—and that the blessed life which began in Bethlehem nineteen hundred years ago is the image and brightness of the Eternal Love?

" And if you keep it for a day, why not always? But you can never keep it alone. HENRY VAN DYKE."

(*Thoughtfully.*) Say, that's good, isn't it? " *Keeping* Christmas." That isn't a half bad idea! " But you can never keep it alone." That man Van Dyke was surely right on that thought.

Say, folks, why shouldn't we agree to try this idea of keeping Christmas? I believe it would be a good plan for this family, don't you? (*Others nod assent.*)

And if we are going to, of course we ought to remind ourselves of that Bethlehem story, don't you think? I suppose we've got a Bible around the house somewhere, haven't we, mother? I declare, though, it is a long time since we opened it together. Suppose we get the old Book out and read that story together, folks!

(MRS. BUSYMAN *goes out, returning in a moment with a Bible, from which she is wiping off an accumulation of dust.*)

MRS. BUSYMAN: Here it is, Robert. It's a bit dusty. I'm afraid that we haven't any of us been reading it any too much lately. We seem to have been too busy, and have sort of gotten out of the

habit we used to have when we were first married, of reading it together. It would surely be a good thing for us all to get acquainted with the Bible again.

(MR. BUSYMAN *takes the Bible and opens it to Luke 2, reading aloud verses 1-20, while the others sit reverently, listening.*)

MISS FLUTTERBY (*going to her father, placing her hand on his shoulder*) : Thank you, dad; that is a beautiful story, surely we ought not to forget it. How much God loved us to give us so wonderful a Christmas gift! I'm going to give my life to helping the little children of the poor folks understand how much God loves us all. That will be *keeping* Christmas, will it not, daddy?

MR. BUSYMAN (*very quietly, and with deep feeling*) : Yes, indeed, little daughter, that will be helping many folks to " keep it always."

GO-AS-YOU-PLEASE (*hesitatingly*) : Say, dad, I've been thinking while you were reading, and I've sort of come to the conclusion that if you don't mind too much, I'd like to have the cash instead of that car you gave me the order for. I happen to know a couple of splendid fellows at college who have been having a pretty hard time to get along—earning their own way, you know. And if I could have the cash instead of the car, I'd be able to help those fellows out a good bit the rest of the year.

MRS. BUSYMAN (*happily*) : I've been wondering these last few days what this thing they called the " Christmas Spirit " was, anyhow. But now I know. The reading of the book has brought the real Christmas Spirit into our home. And if it will do that for us on one day, why not have it every day? Let's begin every day with a message from the Bible; wouldn't it help us to really keep Christmas always?

ALL THE OTHERS: Good! We'll do it. The Bible for us every day! (*Exeunt.*)

CHOIR: " Break Thou the Bread of Life, Dear Lord, to Me."

SCENE 3. THE STAR MAIDENS

Setting: Platform bare, arranged in three levels, dark curtain background. Spot light only, on speakers in their turn.

NOTE. If three-level platform is impracticable, same effect may be had by arranging boxes of different heights for Star Maidens, highest for 1, lower for 2, and 3. Maidens 4 and 5 will stand on platform.

Characters: Five "Star Maidens." Five Attendants. All in flowing white robes.

(*Enter* FIRST STAR MAIDEN, *taking her position on highest level, center.*)

FIRST STAR MAIDEN (*slowly, with dignity*):

"In the beginning, God"—
Back of all earth's wondrous life,
Back of all heav'ns wondrous space,
Back of all man's yearning hope—
"In the beginning, God!"
Back of all, and through it all—
All of time's wide circling years,
All of eternity's endless age;
Gropingly and yearningly,
Man is reaching up to God!

(*Points upward, holding pose while* STAR MAIDENS TWO *and* THREE *enter with two attendants.* MAIDENS *take position on second level, in front of and about four feet on either side of* MAIDEN ONE. ATTENDANTS *remain on either side, near edge of platform. Soft organ music as these enter.*)

SECOND AND THIRD STAR MAIDENS (*in unison*):

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God
And thy neighbor as thyself."
Upward reach to God above
Outward to thy fellow men. (*Gesture.*)
Down from above comes radiant light
Down to lighten lives of man:
Outward it spreads to all mankind
Girdling the globe with its rays,
But ne'er for one alone it shines—
Always for all mankind!

(*Enter* FOURTH *and* FIFTH STAR MAIDENS, *with three* ATTENDANTS. MAIDENS *take positions on lowest level, same distance in*

front of and each about midway of the distance between MAIDEN ONE *and* MAIDENS TWO *and* THREE. *They should be about five or six feet apart. Attendants join other attendants near edge of platform on either side. Soft music as these enter.*)

FOURTH AND FIFTH STAR MAIDENS (*in unison*):

Deep in the depths of sadness,
Lonely, forsaken, they lie,
Multitudes sadly neglected,
Dying in darkness and sin.
Upward to God, and outward
Toward men—the story is not told—
Downward its rays must reach to all,
Lonely, neglected, and lost,
Upward, and outward, and downward—
Thus the full story is told.

(*Platform dark; soft music.* ATTENDANTS *quickly move to proper positions between* STAR MAIDENS *to form outline of five-pointed star. When all are in position, each flashes on strong electric flashlight, held high while they sing, to the tune of "O Little Town of Bethlehem."*)

STAR MAIDENS AND ATTENDANTS:

O Glorious Star of Light Divine,
How bright thy glory shines!
It cometh down from God above,
And shineth out in love,
To farthest ends of all the earth.
It tells of glad new birth.
To every soul in darkness bound,
It sings of Freedom found!

PARTICIPANTS AND AUDIENCE (*join in singing*): "Joy to the World, the Lord Is Come."

Prayer and Benediction.

2. THE TRIUMPH OF HAPPINESS

Synopsis

Prologue. "Interpreter."

Episode I. "Nothing-to-do-Town." Junior Boys, the Spirit of Gloom, the Spirit of Mischief, the Spirit of Happiness.

Episode II. "Busyland." The Junior Boys, the Spirit of Happiness, the Happiness Helpers, a C. V. S. Primary Group, a Group of Junior Girls, a Group of Junior or Intermediate Boys.

Interlude. The C. V. S. Song.

Episode III. "The Light of Happiness." Scene 1. In the Home, Pantomime by Primary Group. Scene 2. On the Playground, Junior Boys. Scene 3. Among the Lonely, Intermediate Girls. Scene 4. In the Church, a "Summer Christmas Tree." Scene 5. In "Our Father's World."

Epilogue. "Broadcasting Happiness." The Spirit of Happiness and the Entire C. V. S. Participants lead audience to exhibit-room for the inspection of exhibit of Church Vacation School handwork.

PROLOGUE

"THE INTERPRETER"

(*If desired,* The Interpreter, *a primary boy, may be dressed to represent an old-time town-watchman, carrying a lantern, or a town-crier, with his bell. Or he may be in a simple white suit. He should carry a long cardboard sign, with the single word "Interpreter" in big letters. This sign should be about as long as the boy is tall. It should be concealed from the audience—blank side toward them—until the second line of the second stanza, when he should hold it high above his head, then put it down at his feet, so audience will see it during rest of his speech.*)

The Interpreter (*recites*):

I'm only a little fellow,
And not so very old,
But I'm really quite important,
As you'll see when my story's told.

My name is as long as I am—
" Interpreter," as you see:
It sounds pretty big for a boy:
But I guess it'll fit even me.

For my job is just to tell you
The tale of our evening's play;
To picture the scenes before you,
And guide in the Happiness way.

We'll picture before you in act and so
The joys of Vacation School.
How Happiness dwelleth among us
And teaches the Golden Rule.

At first you'll see how some fellows
In the town of " Nothing-to-do "
Were driven by Gloom and Mischief;
Till Happiness wandered through,

And led them to bright " Busyland "
Where C. V. S. joys abound,
With stories and songs and handwork,
There Happiness true is found.

And then you'll see how the gladness
Of C. V. S. reaches out
To homes and playgrounds and far-away lands,
Till there's no room left for doubt.

That C. V. S. is like magic
In driving all Gloom away,
In changing the dark of sadness
To brightness of dawning day.

And then at the end we'll ask you
To " broadcast " the message far,
Till all the children shall hear it,
And follow the C. V. S. Star.

We welcome you heartily, friends,
We're glad you have heeded our call;
We hope you'll help spread the story
Of C. V. S. joys for all.

EPISODE I

"NOTHING-TO-DO-TOWN"

Setting: Platform bare, curtain background.

Characters: Four Junior Boys, Harry, Jack, Tom, and Bill, in ordinary summertime play clothes. The Spirit of Gloom, an older girl or young woman, in costume of dark gray, brown, or black, with hood. The Spirit of Mischief, a Primary or Junior Girl; costume of red or other bright color. The Spirit of Happiness, an older girl or young woman. She should be the most attractive one of the three Spirits. Costume of bright yellow—flowing hair, bound with gold ribbon around forehead. Carries yellow wand about three feet long.

(*Enter* TOM *and* BILL, *sit down on floor or small boxes. A suggestion of a curbstone will be effective, and can be easily made by a row of small wooden boxes.*)

TOM: Hey, Bill, what yer doin' today?

BILL: 'Lo, Tom. Doin'? Nothin' 'tall, just same as usual. What you?

TOM: Same as you. What is there to do, anyway, in this dead town. Oh, there come Jack and Harry. Let's see if they've got anything to do. (*Enter* JACK *and* HARRY.)

TOM: 'Lo, fellows! Where you goin'? What yer doin' today?

JACK: 'Lo! Doin'? Today? Why, just the same as yesterday, I guess—and that's nothin'. There ain't anything for us fellers to do in such a dead town as this place.

HARRY: Right you are, Jack. Whoever named this place sure hit it right. "Nothing-to-do-Town"—that's this burg, sure enough. Say, fellows, don't you almost wish that we had school in vacationtime? I know it sounds fishy, but, gee! I'm getting tired of settin' round here on this curb every day, just watching a million or so autos go by—just goin' through the town never stoppin' at all, always goin' somewhere else. Nothin' ever happens here.

TOM (*looking off to right*): Say, look! Who's that comin' there? Isn't she the strangest? Never saw anybody lookin' like that around here, did you?

(*All rise and look intently off to right. Soft, slow music in minor key.* BOYS *shudder as* SPIRIT OF GLOOM *enters. Retreat as she advances.*)

SPIRIT OF GLOOM (*in a low monotone*): I am the Spirit of Gloom. And I am looking for folks who have nothing to do. When I find them, I fill their minds with thoughts of sadness from this bag of woes which I carry (*holds out black bag labeled* WOES) and so I make them like myself. Surely, in this town I ought to find many victims. Ah, here are some boys. 'Tis hard for Gloom to capture them; they are young, and full of life, but I can see they have nothing to do. I will stand behind them, and weave my magic spell over them.

(*Steps behind* BOYS, *who sink down on curb, resting elbows on knees and heads in hands. Minor music continues as light slowly changes from amber to blue, as* SPIRIT OF GLOOM *slowly waves Bag of Woes over heads of* BOYS.)

Aha! Now they are in my power! I can do anything I wish with them. (*Looks off left.*) But stay! Here cometh that strange sister of mine, the Spirit of Mischief. I will wait to see what she can do with these victims of mine.

(*Light changes to red, and music becomes bright and sprightly.* BOYS *start up eagerly, looking left, as* SPIRIT OF MISCHIEF *comes dancing in.* SPIRIT OF GLOOM *retreats to back of platform.*)

SPIRIT OF MISCHIEF: Aha, aha, 'tis a goodly day for me, and to a goodly place have I come. "Nothing-to-do-Town"? Surely here I can find some who will eagerly accept my suggestions. Much mischief can be done even in a little town. Who will be my helpers? Oh, there they are—the boys! (*Dances over to the* BOYS.) Busy, boys? Or looking for something to do?

BILL: Busy? In this town? There ain't nothin' to do here, ever. Lookin' for somethin' to do? You bet! Can you tell us somethin'? Who are you, anyhow?

SPIRIT OF MISCHIEF: I am a bright spirit from a far-away land, and I have come to give folks who are looking for it, something to do. Something with lots of fun in it, too. Want to go with me?

JACK: Where, and what for? You look as though you might get us in trouble.

TOM: Aw, shut up, Jack. Can't you see that there's sure to be some fun for us? Let's go.

(SPIRIT OF MISCHIEF *goes to each boy and whispers in his ears, evidently suggesting some mischief.*)

BILL (*grinning all over*): Great! Say, that's some dandy scheme. But, gee! I'd hate to get caught doing it!

HARRY: Well, I don't know. That sure sounds like lots of fun, but I wonder where it'll land us. I'd like to try it, but I wonder if I dare to.

TOM: Say! That's a big idea. Where'd you ever think of it? You must be the real article, sure enough. Come on, fellers, we're off!

JACK: Oh, fellows, wait a minute, we don't know where we'll land if we do these things. Let's not be in too much of a hurry. Perhaps still another kind of a visitor will come along. Let's wait a minute and see.

(*Light changes from red to amber.* SPIRIT OF GLOOM *slinks slowly off platform, and* SPIRIT OF MISCHIEF *covers her eyes and runs off as fast as she can, as the* SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS *enters to stately, yet joyous music, e. g., Beethoven's "Hymn to Joy."*)

SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS (*smiling at the* BOYS): Good morning, boys, it's vacationtime, isn't it? And are you having good times these summer days? Isn't it great to be well and out-of-doors in such a beautiful time?

HARRY: Good morning, Miss. Yes, it's vacationtime, but I don't know as we fellows are having exactly what you'd call a good time. Fact is, this is Nothing-to-do-Town, and so we fellows were just sitting here on the curb passing the time away. And we've been having some strange visitors this morning. You're the third one we've had.

SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS: "Nothing-to-do-Town," did you say? Well, that's a strange place for such active fellows as you are. Why don't you come along with me to "Busyland"? It isn't far, and with my magic wand here (*waves magic wand*) we can be there in a jiffy. You'll find plenty to do there, and I can promise you that you'll be happy doing it, for I'm the Spirit of Happiness, you know. Will you come?

TOM AND BILL: You're sure we'll like it? This ain't any goody-goody stuff you're tryin' to pull on us, is it? Our last visitor gave us some dandy schemes. Is yours better than hers?

SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS (*smiling*): Come and see for yourselves. I'll tell you this much, though; that in the place I'm going to lead you there are lots of boys and girls who are just so eager for the good times they have in this "Busyland" of mine that they begin to talk about it months ahead of time.

JACK: Come on, fellows, that sounds good to me. Let's go!

TOM, BILL, AND HARRY: All right, lead on. We'll try anything once!

(*Music is resumed,* SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS *leads boys off platform.*)

EPISODE II

"BUSYLAND"

Setting: Platform divided into three sections with screens which can be easily removed; screens or curtains across the front a short distance back from the edge so as to permit the Spirit of Happiness and the boys to come out into sight of audience before any of the groups are shown. On easel at extreme right of platform is an attractive C. V. S. poster.

Arrangement of sections: Center, little chairs for Primary or Beginners arranged in a circle, with larger chair for teacher at center, rear, facing audience. Left, Junior Girls, raffia or basketry work, small table with materials, group of chairs in semicircle. Teacher stands or moves about group. Right, oblong table, with woodworking tools and partly finished objects.

Characters: The Spirit of Happiness; the Four Boys—Tom, Bill, Jack, and Harry; the Happiness Helpers, three C. V. S. Teachers; three groups of C. V. S. Pupils (number depending on size of school and size of platform).

NOTE: The size of the platform in some churches where this pageant is given may be such as to make impossible the arrangement as suggested above. In such cases the entire platform may be used for each scene in succession, set for the first scene when the

episode opens, and interludes of music being inserted while the two necessary shifts of scenes are made.

(*Enter* SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS, *followed by the four boys.*)

SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS: Well, boys, here we are in "Busyland." And pretty soon you'll see how the boys and girls fill up the vacationtime in Busyland.

TOM (*spying the C. V. S. poster on easel*): What's that over there? May we go and look at it? (*Boys cross platform to poster, examine it curiously.*) "C. V. S." What in the world do those letters stand for?

BILL: Well, I guess V stands for Vacation, and maybe S for Singing, or Song. But what the C is for is beyond me. What do you make out of it, Jack?

JACK: Say, you fellows are dense. Why don't you use your eyes? Look at the place where this poster is. It's in front of a church, isn't it? And if V stands for Vacation, and the thing is in front of a church, then C must stand for Church, of course.

HARRY AND BILL: Sure enough! Say, we were dense, weren't we? Church Vacation—that's funny.

TOM: Oh, I see! They just got the letters twisted around, that's all. It ought to be V-C-S. "Vacation—Church Shut-up." But I don't see why they need to put a poster outside to tell folks so. Over in our town they all know the church would be shut up in vacationtime anyway.

BILL: Yes, and most of the rest of the time, too. But we should worry.

HARRY: But if that's it, what's all the rest of this poster about? (*Reading.*) "Do you like Stories—Games—Basketry—Woodwork? Then come every morning at nine o'clock." Come where? I don't know about this basketry, but games and stories, and woodwork sure sound good to me. Say, Miss Happiness, what kind of a scheme is this, anyhow?

SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS (*laughing*): I guess you boys never had a half a chance over in your Nothing-to-do-Town, or you would know that C. V. S. doesn't stand for a church shut up for a vacation. It's just the opposite from that. It means that this church is open not just once a week, but *every day* from nine to twelve in the

morning for the boys and girls for the best kind of good times. What those letters mean is just this, Church Vacation School, and that poster is inviting all the boys and girls around here to come to it every day.

TOM: Didn't I tell you so! Church! I knew this was some kind of a goody-goody scheme she was pullin' off on us. Come on fellows, let's beat it! Vacation *school*—not for mine! I'm off!

JACK: Wait a minute, Tom, let's see what kind of a thing this is. It's surely something new. We haven't anything like that over in our town. Does it open soon, Miss Happiness?

SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS: Yes, right now, and I want you boys to watch and see whether the children seem to enjoy it.

(*Curtain is drawn aside, or screen removed from front on center section. Group of* BEGINNERS *or* PRIMARY CHILDREN *are revealed seated in the circle, or come marching in.*)

(C. V. S. PRIMARY GROUP *sing together "God Sends His Love to You" or some other Primary C. V. S. Song.*)

HARRY: That's kinda pretty. Rather nice for the kids, but nothing in that for fellows like us.

SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS: That's true, but just wait. There's something in this Vacation School for all kinds of children and fellows, too.

(*Curtain is drawn aside, or screen is removed from front of left-hand group, showing group of* JUNIOR C. V. S. GIRLS *around table doing basketry or raffia work.*)

(C. V. S. JUNIOR GIRLS *give demonstration of regular methods of raffia or basketry work, the teacher going about the group encouraging and helping. Care should be taken to make the whole scene as natural and as happy as possible.*)

BILL: They sure seem to be having a good time at that sort of thing. Don't look much like school to me. Did you see how those girls were talking all the time? But say, didn't you say there was something in this for fellows like us? Nothin' doin' yet, sure.

SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS: True, you haven't seen any fellows like yourselves yet, but they are here, and you shall see them; yes, and maybe have a chance to see if you could do the same things.

(*Curtain is drawn aside, or screen removed from front of right-hand group, showing* JUNIOR BOYS *around table covered with wood, tools, and partly finished handwork. Each boy is working on some particular piece, or two or three of them may be working together on some project. Instructor* (*young man*) *is moving around, inspecting and helping different boys. Everybody is busy and happy, talking about their work or the C. V. S.; two of the boys might be talking about the C. V. S. trip to the baseball game to be taken that afternoon. Both this scene and the one of the* JUNIOR GIRLS *should be both in spirit and in action as faithful as possible a reproduction of every-day scenes in the craft-work period of a well-conducted C. V. S.*)

TOM (*wistfully*) : Did you say, Miss Happiness, that maybe we might have a chance to get into this thing ourselves? My, I wish we could! Don't you, fellows?

HARRY, JACK, AND BILL (*in concert*) : You bet we do!

SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS (*smiling*) : I thought you would when you saw it. Of course you may get right into it right now. These three folks you have seen with the children are called " Happiness Helpers," and I am sure this one will gladly welcome you boys into his group. How about it, Mr. Helper? Can you find room in your group for four new boys who have never had a chance like this?

MR. HAPPINESS HELPER (*coming forward to greet the boys*) : Surely we can find room for some new boys, we're always glad to have them. So you think you'd like to do some woodwork, do you, boys? Well, this is only one small part of the good things we find to do in our Vacation School. I'm sure you'll enjoy the others as well as this. Boys (*to group around table*), here are some new fellows who want to get into our gang. They think maybe they can do something like this work of ours if they have a chance. What do you say, can we find room for them.

JUNIOR BOYS: Sure, bring 'em in ; the more the merrier.

MR. HAPPINESS HELPER: Let's give them a welcome by telling them our vacation school motto. Shall we? All together now!

BOYS (*loudly*) : " And they helped every one his neighbor, and every one said unto his brother, ' Be of good cheer.' "

(TOM, BILL, HARRY, *and* JACK *are made a part of the group, and start work under the direction of* MR. HAPPINESS HELPER.)

INTERLUDE

Song by the entire vacation school:

THERE IS SOMETHING ON EARTH FOR THE CHILDREN TO DO

(Tune, " Fair Harvard.")

There is something on earth for the children to do
While they go through this beautiful land;
There's a pathway of love where the youngest may go,
And employment for each little hand.

CHORUS

There is something to do, there is something to do,
Something to be done all the way,
To lead others to love the dear Saviour above,
There is something to do ev'ry day.

There are smiles to be giv'n, kind deeds to be done;
Gentle words to be dropped by the way:
For the child that is seeking to follow the Lord,
There is something to do every day. (Chorus.)

There are lessons to learn, both at home and at school,
There are battles to fight for the right;
There's a watch to be kept over temper and tongue,
And God's help to be asked day and night. (Chorus.)

NOTE. Some one, or two, of the hymns memorized by the vacation school during the term may be substituted for the above.

EPISODE III

THE LIGHT OF HAPPINESS

SCENE 1. IN THE HOME

Setting: The living-room of an ordinary home; center-table, with sewing-basket piled high with mending, three or four chairs, at least one a rocker.

Characters: A mother, in house dress, with apron; two or three Primary Children; the Spirit of Happiness.

(*Soft music, "Home, Sweet Home." Enter* MOTHER, *looks at sewing-basket, sinks down wearily in rocker.*)

MOTHER: Oh dear, what a pile of mending! And I'm so tired it doesn't seem as though I could do another stroke of work today. And I do get so tired of mending, just trying to make old things last a little longer. I do wish I could work on something *new* once in a while!

(*Leans back in chair, closes eyes as though very tired. Enter* SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS, *accompanied by* PRIMARY CHILDREN, *very softly, in time with the music of "Home, Sweet Home," played very softly throughout rest of scene.*)

PANTOMIME

SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS motions toward tired MOTHER, then to big pile of mending, then with sweeping gesture around room to indicate need of tidying it up.

PRIMARY CHILDREN, in time with the music, dust the chairs and table; one takes big pile of mending out of basket and goes out with it, returning with pile of clothes neatly folded and apparently all mended.

When all is finished, they gather around SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS behind MOTHER'S *chair*. SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS touches MOTHER'S shoulder with her wand and awakes her. CHILDREN surround her with shouts of happiness while she rubs her eyes, looking at the room and at the mending. SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS lifts hands over the group as though in benediction.

(*Curtain is drawn or light faded out.*)

SCENE 2. ON THE PLAYGROUND

Setting: Platform bare, curtain background. Suggestion of school playground if possible.

Characters: Ten to fifteen Junior and Intermediate Boys.

(*Enter group of boys, all but one. Some have baseballs and bats.*)

HAL: Come on, fellows, let's have a game of ball!

GROUP: All right, we're with you! Hal and Bert choose up.

(HAL *and* BERT *toss the bat to decide first choice and proceed to choose their sides. About the middle of the choosing a strange boy appears from left.*)

TOM: Look, who's the new kid? Wonder if he can play?

JIM: Aw, never mind him, we don't know him anyway, go head with choosin' up for the game.

BERT: Keep still, Jim. How'd you feel if you was in his place? What's that in the vacation school motto about "helping every one his neighbor"? Hullo, there, Kid! Want to play ball?

PHILIP (*the "new kid"*): Sure! Glad of the chance. Didn't know whether you fellows would care to take in a new kid or not, but thought I'd come out anyhow. You bet I like to play ball, and I'm new in this town. My folks just moved here.

HAL (*holding out his hand*): Glad to see you, Kid. What's your name? It's my turn to choose, and I'll take you on my side. Where do you want to play?

PHILIP: My name's Philip Brown. Glad to be on your side. Don't care where I play, just put me anywhere, and I'll do my best. You sure have a good bunch of kids here in this town.

(THE SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS *suddenly appears at center, rear, extending her hands in blessing over the boys.*)

SCENE 3. AMONG THE LONELY

Setting: The living-room of a poor home; table, with kerosene-lamp, one chair, and a wheel-chair.

Characters: Invalid "shut-in"; three Intermediate Girls; the Spirit of Happiness.

(THE INVALID *is seated in the wheel-chair, near the table; a piece of sewing is in her hands, but she has stopped sewing.*)

THE INVALID: Oh dear, it gets so lonely here all day alone. Tom has to go off to work so early in the morning, and I just have to stay here alone all day long without anybody to talk to or any one to help me at all. Now I've dropped my needle, and I can't reach to pick it up, and I'll just have to sit here and wait until Tom comes home tonight. Perhaps I can read a little, though my eyes are getting pretty bad.

(*Wheels chair nearer to table, picks up paper, starts to read. Knock at the door.*)

Come in! I wonder who is coming to see me! Nobody ever comes nowadays!

(*Enter the* SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS *accompanied by the* INTERMEDIATE GIRLS. SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS *goes to center, rear, and stands looking on during scene.*)

MARY (*to* INVALID) : Oh, Mrs. Lonely, we're the Sunshine Girls, from the Church-Around-the-Corner, and we just heard the other day of you, and how much alone you were all day long and so we thought we'd come around to see you and bring you some news from the church.

ALICE: Yes, and see, Mrs. Lonely, we've brought you these flowers. There are some forget-me-nots here, just to let you know that we don't intend to forget you.

LOUISE: And I thought you might like some of this custard, so I asked mother to let me bring some to you.

THE INVALID: Bless you, girls, it surely is good of you to come! Just before you knocked, I was complaining of how lonely it is just sitting here all day all alone, and here you are with these things for me! " Sunshine Girls," did you say you call yourselves? That is surely a good name, for you have cheered and brightened up this old room so that it seems as though it shines like real sunshine. But whatever made you young girls think of an old woman like me, up here in the attic all alone?

MARY: Why, you see, we girls have been trying to be sort of " Assistant Happiness Helpers "—assistants to the teachers, we mean, in the vacation school in our Church-Around-the-Corner. And in our vacation school motto which we say all together every morning are the words, " And every one said to his brother, Be of good cheer," and we got to thinking of who there was we could say that to besides just ourselves in vacation school. And one of the teachers told us about you, and we decided that it would be living up to our motto if we called you our oldest sister and came to say to you, " Be of Good Cheer." So here we are. Would you like us to sing for you one of our vacation-school songs?

GIRLS AND THE SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS (*sing together, one stanza only*) :

How strong and sweet my Father's care,
Which round about me, like the air,
Is always with me, everywhere;
He cares for me.

(*Curtain.*)

Scene 4. In the Church

A SUMMER CHRISTMAS-TREE

Setting: If the size of platform and of the vacation school permit, arrange chairs for the whole school on platform, like arrangement for regular worship period, leaving space at right end of platform for Christmas-tree behind a screen. Chairs and table should be at right angles to audience, leaving room enough at front of platform for children to pass from their seats to the tree. If size of platform does not permit of this arrangement, seat vacation school in front seats of audience and place superintendent's stand or table on platform with Christmas-tree in center, hidden by curtain or screen.

Characters: The entire vacation school.

Superintendent (*or Principal*) : One of the things for which our vacation school stands is the spreading of the Light of Happiness as it is found in the gospel of Jesus, not only in the home, on the playground, and among the lonely here at home, but far-away in other lands. So tonight we are to decorate a Summer Christmas-tree and present it to the Spirit of Happiness who will wave her magic wand and transport these good things to some needy boys and girls far away.

You are all invited to join with the vacation school in two of the beautiful Christmas carols, " O Come, All Ye Faithful " and " O Little Town of Bethlehem."

(*All stand and sing both carols.*)

We will now listen to a portion of the Christmas story.

(*Junior boy recites from memory Matthew 2 : 1-11.*)

And now we are ready for the presentation of our gifts for the far-away boys and girls. First of all, the Beginners will bring what they have made ready.

THE C. V. S. BEGINNERS (*led by their teachers, march on to platform, and surround Christmas-tree, from which the screen has been removed. As they march, they sing "Bringing Gifts to Jesus" to the tune of chorus of "Bringing in the Sheaves"*) :

Bringing gifts to Jesus, bringing gifts are we,
For the little children far across the sea.
Thanking him for blessing filling every day,
Thus we say our "Thank you," sending gifts away.

(*The Superintendent and Beginners' Teachers hang gifts upon the tree, which has previously been decorated with tinsel and ornaments.*)

THE C. V. S. PRIMARY DEPARTMENT (*unless Beginners and Primary are together, march to platform and present their gifts, then form semicircle facing audience, while one of the girls in the group recites*) :

For the dark-skinned boys and girls
Of the lands across the sea,
We've made the gifts we bring tonight,
To hang on this Christmas-tree.
We've had good times in making
And gladly send them afar,
That others may know of Jesus' love
And follow the Christmas Star.

THE C. V. S. JUNIOR GIRLS (*march to platform, singing as they march*) :

We've a message to give to the nations,
That the Lord who reigneth above,
Hath sent us his Son to save us,
And show us that God is Love,
And show us that God is Love.

For the darkness shall turn to dawning,
And the dawning to noon-day bright;
And Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth,
The kingdom of love and light.

THE C. V. S. JUNIOR BOYS (*piling gifts on floor and table around tree, return to their seats, leaving one boy on platform, who recites*):

The Wise-men of old brought their treasures
To lay at the feet of the King—
Their gold, their myrrh and frankincense;
We've nothing like that to bring;
But we've worked as hard as we're able,
To make these gifts for tonight,
That others may learn of the Master;
Their lives may be glad and bright.

SUPERINTENDENT: Now comes the opportunity of the rest of you. You have not had the chance to make things for this Summer Christmas-tree, as the children have, but you may have your chance to give of your money for the expenses of our own vacation school, and for the sending of these gifts to the far-away lands. The offering for the vacation-school work and for missions will now be gathered by the C. V. S. Boys. And during the offering one of our "Happiness Helpers" will sing for us the message of present-day Wise-men.

(*The offering plates are passed.*)

SOLO ("*Christians, Lo, the Star Appeareth,*" *to the tune Trust, arr. from Mendelssohn, in "Hymnal for American Youth," No. 92*).

SUPERINTENDENT: Now through the Spirit of Happiness we will send our gifts to those who need them.

(*Soft music, "Master, No Offering, Costly or Sweet"; the* SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS *enters during the music.*)

SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS: Right glad am I that this vacation school has thought of the other boys and girls who do not have all the good things which you have, and that you have called me to be your messenger to send all these good things to the far-away lands. Well do I know that the boys and girls in those far-away lands will be pleased and glad when they see this Christmas-tree next December. You have made it possible for the Spirit of Happiness to visit many homes which have never known that there was such a

spirit. Your gifts will brighten many lives which have always been dark, and your gladness here in your thought for others will spread around the world.

Surely, here in your vacation school you have been learning to grow as Jesus grew, in the "foursquare" way, "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

And have you learned the "Song of the Foursquare Life"? Come, sing it with me. I will sing the stanzas, and you may join in the chorus.

INTERLUDE. THE SONG OF THE FOURSQUARE LIFE

(*Sung by the* SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS *and the entire vacation school, to the tune "Materna." For this song, the* SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS *might come down from the platform, and screens or curtains be drawn, so that the platform might be arranged for the epilogue during this interlude, in order to save time and avoid delay.*)

SOLO:

Oh, boys and girls in growing time,
So hearty, strong, and tall;
Oh, have you learned how Jesus grew
In wisdom—stature—all?

CHORUS:

O Boyhood bright, O Manhood strong,
O Life, the full Foursquare;
We all would grow as Jesus grew,
Our lives, like His, made fair.

He grew in stature and in mind,
In friendliness and love,
In favor with the folks around,
And with his God above. (Chorus.)

And so would we, in School and Home,
In Worship and in Play,
Grow every day more like the Christ
Who grew in every way. (Chorus.)

ALL:

'Tis thus we come to Church and School,
To learn the Life Foursquare;
The life of happiness and strength,
The life divinely fair. (Chorus.)

EPILOGUE. BROADCASTING HAPPINESS

Setting: The platform should be divided by a curtain or screen into two sections, one to represent the studio of a radio broadcasting station, the other the operating-room, with its radio instruments. Instead of antennæ, numbers of strips of yellow crêpe-paper should be attached to the back of the radio cabinet and unrolled, at a signal, by eight (or more) of the younger members of the C. V. S. The studio should have an imitation microphone into which the Spirit of Happiness sings.

Characters: The Spirit of Happiness; the radio operator, an older boy or young man teacher; eight (or more) radio broadcasting messengers; the entire vacation school.

(*Enter* RADIO OPERATOR, *seats himself at table, puts on phones, turns dials for an instant.*)

RADIO OPERATOR: Good! Very little Q. R. M. tonight. Conditions are fine for our broadcasting! Let's see, what's on tonight? (*Consults slip of paper on table.*) Oh, yes, "C. V. S. Song, by the Spirit of Happiness." That will be good, I am sure. Glad to broadcast a thing like that. It seems like sending out happiness everywhere. My, but this is interesting work, sending out fine things like this into the air and never knowing how many thousands of folks are listening in! Great thing, anyway, this C. V. S.—everybody ought to know about it. I wonder if she's ready. (*Touches button.*) Yes, there she is.

(*Enter* SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS, *in studio.*)

SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS: My, but I'm just a bit nervous tonight. This idea of singing to a great crowd you can't see is strange. I can't quite get used to it. But what a chance to broadcast happiness everywhere! And this C. V. S. Song just fits the happiness idea. I wonder if everything is ready.

RADIO OPERATOR: All ready now, Miss Happiness; please sing very distinctly, so that everybody will get the words clearly.

SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS (*steps to "microphone" and sings*):

THE VACATION SCHOOL SONG

(Tune: "I Love to Tell the Story.")

Send out the happy tidings,
Wherever children dwell,
Of Happiness unbounded—
Of Joy the story tell:
Tell out the glad, true story
Of a place for girls and boys,
In the Church of Christ their Saviour—
O bid them share its joys!

CHORUS

Tell out the glad, good story,
Of days of joy and glory,
Of busy hours and happy,
In the Church Vacation School.

Wherever hearts are lonely,
And idle hands have need,
There send the glad new story,
That he who runs may read;
The Church has love for children
It seeks to reach them all,
For happy days and holy,
O heed the Master's call. (Chorus.)

(*At the beginning of the third stanza the eight* RADIO MESSENGERS *move out into the audience, down all the aisles, unrolling the strips of yellow crêpe-paper as they go. They may join with the* SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS *in this last stanza if they are old enough to sing well.*)

We love to spread the story
Of gladness and good cheer;
Of days in holy service
For Christ our Master dear.
Go, tell it out to others,
Till all the world shall know
The joy of helping others,
And thus like Christ to grow. (Chorus.)

SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS (*stepping to front of platform*): And now, good friends, we bid you follow our Radio Messengers to the workshop of "Busyland," where you may see what these busy fingers have wrought during these days of vacation school. The members of the school will stand and wait while the Messengers escort our visitors to our exhibit-room.

(*Lively march on piano.*)

END.

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